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A  
DISCOURSE  
CONCERNING  
Fundamental Articles  
IN  
RELIGION.

In which a Method is laid down for the more  
effectual Uniting of

PROTESTANTS,

And promoting a more

*General TOLERATION*  
*amongst them.*

Being the entire Dissertation of a late Book,  
entitled, *Nubes Testium*, dedicated to His  
GRACE the Lord Archbishop of *Canter-*  
*bury.*

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Written Originally in *Latin* by *J. Alph. Turretin* Pro-  
fessor of Divinity at *Geneva*, and now Translated  
into *English*.

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L O N D O N:


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THE  
PREFACE.

 *THE following Treatise of Fundamental Articles was written in Latin by the present M. Turretin, Professor of Divinity at Geneva, so well known for his great Learning and Moderation. The great Applause this Piece has met with in the learned World, together with the Desire of some Friends, prevailed with me to translate it into English. In the Original it is prefixed to a*  
A 2 *large*

## THE PREFACE.

*large Collection of Testimonies from various Writers, which are brought to support and illustrate the Doctrine here laid down; and from these, which make up far the greatest Part of the Book, the whole is entitled, Nubes Testium, i. e. A Cloud of Witnesses.*

*THE First Part of those Testimonies, which are taken from Scripture, are very plain and full to the purpose for which they are designed; and worthy the serious Consideration of every Christian: for which reason, they are added at the end of this Translation, for the Benefit of the English Reader.*

*THE rest are all human, and produced for the sake of those who are more apt to be determined by such Authorities, than by Reasoning and Argument; and seem to be added to prevent the Imputation of Novelty, Rashness, or Partiality, by which some might otherwise be apt to be affrighted themselves, or to terrify others. They are taken from as great Divines as any that have appeared thro the several Ages of Christianity, and are divided into four Classes.*

THE

## The P R E F A C E.

*T H E* first contains the Sentiments of some of the most eminent, as well as most antient Fathers of the Church; and also of the principal Reformers, who have laid down the same Characters of Fundamentals, as are given in this Discourse.

*T H E* Second contains such as are taken from Luther, and several Lutheran Divines, wherein they express a great desire of Union and Concord with their Reformed Brethren, and earnestly press and plead for it.

*T H E* Third contains some Passages taken out of Zuinglius, Calvin, and their Followers, wherein they also express a mutual Desire of Union with their Lutheran Brethren, and equally urge it upon them. Yet our Author complains under each Class, that for the most part, Men have not been so uniform and consistent with such Expressions as might be wish'd; but produces them as Testimonies extorted by the Force of Truth, which has darted into Mens Minds with irresistible Light, when they have calmly and impartially considered these things.

*T H E* Fourth contains some Authentick Acts of Synods and Conferences, which  
have



## THE PREFACE.

have been held in divers Places, and sometimes with Success. These he offers as Instances to shew the Possibility of the thing, that what has been accomplish'd in some Places, may be so in others ; and that it is not from any Defect in the Scheme laid down, that such a Union is not universal.

BUT tho these Testimonies may be of considerable use, and be read with pleasure, by those who are acquainted with the Authors themselves, yet one can hardly think they would be of any great Advantage, or afford much Entertainment to English Readers, who are not acquainted with the Authors, but must take up with such short Quotations from them. As the Argument therefore is entire of itself without them, the Translation of them was judged needless.

THE Subject here treated of is indeed nice and curious, yet handled with great Skill and Sagacity : nor is it of less Importance to allay the Heats and Animosities of all Parties ; to put an end to vain and unprofitable Disputes, and to engage all Christians to exercise Meekness, Gentleness, and Forbearance, which are  
essential



## **The P R E F A C E.**

*essential to Christian Piety, whatever Denominations Men chuse to pass under.*

*T H E* Reader likewise from hence will see the Irreconcilableness of Popery to the true Spirit of Christianity, fairly stated; and easily conclude that a Coalition between Papists and Protestants is impossible and absurd. On the other hand, the Differences between the Lutherans and Calvinists, are represented in such a light, that one can't but be pleas'd to see so plain and easy a Way opened for the reconciling and uniting them; and be induced to hope that each Side will be forward to advance so good a Work; which were it happily effected, would exceedingly strengthen the **P R O T E S T A N T** **I N T E R E S T** abroad.

*F R O M* whence also one may see reason to conclude, that it is not impossible, no, nor very difficult, to compose the Differences among Protestants here in Great Britain, and to unite the various Parties amongst us, in Love and Affection to each other; since the Disagreement of most of these, either from the Establish'd Church, or from each other, is light and inconsiderable, in comparison of the great and substantial

## The P R E F A C E.

*stantial Points of Christianity, wherein they agree: so that if Men of Power and Interest would impartially stand up for Liberty; if they would reprove such as rail at and abuse others meerly for differing from them; and if Christians were every where taught Charity and Forbearance towards their Brethren of different Sentiments; no Disagreement in Opinions, Ceremonies, or Modes of Worship, could hinder such a Union as would be the Glory of the Protestant Interest at Home.*

*AS the former was the more immediate Design of the Author in writing this Discourse, so is the latter of the Translator: And GOD grant it may effectually serve the Ends of Love, Peace, and Union among Protestants, wherever it comes.*

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A  
 DISCOURSE  
 CONCERNING  
 Fundamental Articles  
 IN  
 RELIGION.



THE Subject of *Fundamental Articles* being as weighty and important as any in Religion; either that our Notions herein may be just and right, and that we may be able to distinguish what is of the Essence of Religion, from things which are not Essential, nor of equal Importance; or that we may know how to carry it with a pious and christian Moderation, towards those who differ from us in things which are not necessary; and not venture to condemn them, to exclude them our Communion, or, as

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is



is usual with many, to send them to the very Pit of Destruction: that we may treat of it as briefly and clearly as possible, we shall divide this Discourse into the following Heads. 1. We shall shew what is commonly understood by Fundamental Articles, and such as are not Fundamental. 2. That there is really such a Distinction. 3. We shall reject some false Marks of Fundamentals, and such as will not hold. 4. We shall produce those which to us seem the best and fittest. 5. We shall consider, whether it be possible to fix a certain and determinate Number of Fundamental Articles. 6. How we ought to carry it towards those who differ from us in Fundamentals. 7. How we should behave towards such who differ from us in things not Fundamental. 8. We shall bring an Instance of a Fundamental Difference, in our Separation from the Church of *Rome*. 9. An Instance of a Difference not Fundamental, in the Differences among Protestants. 10. We shall offer some pacifick and healing Advices, which may be useful to promote Union among Christians, leaving them to the Consideration of all good Men, and Lovers of Peace.







## C H A P. I.

*What we are to understand by Fundamental Articles, and such as are not Fundamental. Some Distinctions are also premis'd to prepare the Way for the following Treatise.*



**F**UNDAMENTAL Articles (\*) are those Principles of Religion, which so relate to the Essence and Foundation of it, and are of so great Importance, that without them Religion cannot stand, or at least will be destitute of a chief and necessary Part. Thus, *There is a God*, is a Fundamental Article, nay the first of all; for take away the Existence of God, and all Religion must needs fall to the ground. In like manner, *God is a beneficent Being, and will certainly reward his Worshipers*, is also a Fundamental Article; for take away the Goodness and Munificence of God, and by far the greatest Motive to Piety and Virtue is destroyed: and therefore the Apostle teaches

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(\*) Here we take Fundamental Articles to be the same with things necessary to be known; and don't see any Reason why M. J. la Placette, tho otherwise a very learned and judicious Divine, should distinguish them as he has done, in his Tract. *De fide divina*, Noviss. Ed. Lib. 4. contrary to the common Method, and without any sufficient Grounds, as far as we can discern. That judicious Person seems to carry the Metaphor of a Foundation too far, and labours too much to find different Senses where things are really the same, or at least are dependent on each other.

us, (a) that *he who comes to God, i. e. worships him in any wise, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek him.*

AND since Religion, if we are wholly destitute of it, or at least if we are deficient in any principal Part of it, cannot yield us its proper Fruits, which are, to render us acceptable to God, and to bring us to eternal Salvation; therefore Fundamental Articles are such as are necessary to be known, and believed, in order to obtain the Favour of God, and the Salvation of our Souls.

AGAIN, since Religion with all its essential Parts is the Bond of Church Communion, hence we may conclude, that Fundamental Articles are such as are necessary to be profess'd, in order to hold Communion with any particular Person, or with any religious Society; for it would be absurd to admit any into such a Society, who did either directly deny, or in effect destroy the Essentials, or, as one may call them, the very Vitals of Religion.

THESE are the commonly received Notions that are by the generality of Divines fixed to the Name of Fundamental Articles. Some indeed, the better to distinguish them, make two sorts; Fundamentals with *respect to Things*, or to Religion itself; and Fundamentals with *respect to Persons*. Others make three sorts, and divide them into things necessary to *Salvation*, things necessary to *Religion*, and things

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(a) Heb. XI. 6.

necessary to *the Church*. But, tho these Distinctions may sometimes be well grounded, and have their use, as we shall see afterwards; yet for the most part, and in the ordinary Course of Affairs, they all center in one Point, and signify only the different Properties and Consequences of Fundamental Articles. For those which are Fundamental with *respect to Things*, or to *Religion itself*, are also Fundamental with *respect to such Persons*, to whom Religion is duly propos'd, and who are endued with sufficient Capacities to understand and receive it: so that without them, in the ordinary Course of Affairs, such Persons cannot be entitled to the Favour of God, nor obtain Salvation, nor be accounted true and sound Members of the Church. Nor indeed can it better be known what is Essential in Religion, or what is requisite in order to admit a Person into Church Communion, any other way, than from those Places of Scripture where the Terms of Salvation are laid down, as will be more fully shewn in the Sequel of this Discourse. Therefore passing by these, let us rather premise some other Distinctions more pertinent to the present purpose.

I. SINCE the Revelations which have been granted us by God, have been very different; some whereof have been more clear and full than others, as is evident, by considering the Revelation which is purely from Nature, the Revelation granted to the Patriarchs, the Revelation delivered by *Moses*, and lastly the Christian



Christian Revelation; in like manner, Fundamental Articles must be understood to differ, according to the Difference of these Revelations. But our Design is principally to treat of the Christian Revelation, and consequently of such Articles as do, or do not, belong to the Essence of Christianity.

2. AS the Revelations made by God have been various, so the State and Conditions in which he has placed Men have been so likewise; the Capacities, the Endowments, and the Circumstances which have been allotted to them, have varied almost infinitely: all which things must necessarily be regarded, and allowed their due Weight, in describing Fundamental Articles.

3. WE must also observe, that Persons may offend against some Points of Religion two ways; either by mere *Ignorance*, or by a direct *Denial* or *Opposition*: and both these may take their Rise from different Causes, and be attended with different Circumstances and Effects; some whereof may be more criminal, and others more innocent.

4. PERSONS also may err fundamentally two ways; either by expressly denying something that is Fundamental, or by joining something to the Foundation, that does really destroy it. In the former manner they stumbled at the Foundation, who deny'd the Resurrection, of whom St. Paul speaks (a); and in the latter,

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(a) 1 Cor. XV.



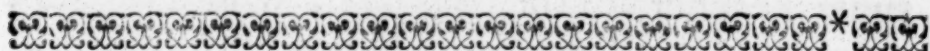
those Teachers of the *Galatians*, whom the same Apostle does so sharply rebuke in his *Epistle*.

5. WHEN we say that Fundamental Articles are such as are necessary to be known and believed, in order to obtain Salvation, we would not be so understood, as if we thought that none who are ignorant of any one of these Articles, or mistake concerning it, can possibly arrive at Salvation: For as in Crimes and evil Actions, so likewise in Ignorance and Mistakes, there is a twofold Remedy; the one on our part, which is *Repentance*, either general or particular; the other on God's part, *Mercy* and *Forgiveness*: by means whereof, as we may hope for Pardon of the greatest Crimes; so it can't be deny'd, but we may also of the most grievous Errors.

6. THIS whole Matter may be considered in a double respect; either as it relates to the *ordinary* Course in which things generally proceed, and which God has made known in his Word; or to those *extraordinary* Ways in which God may, and it can hardly be doubted but he oftentimes does act. But here we only speak of the ordinary way, and leave the other to the Wisdom and good Pleasure of God.

THESE things being premis'd in the general, the Use whereof will appear in what follows; we are next to show, that this Distinction of Truths and Errors into Fundamental, and not Fundamental, is not a vain and empty Distinction.

CHAP.



## C H A P. II.

*That there really are in Religion some Articles Fundamental, and others not Fundamental.*

**T**HAT there are really some Articles in Religion *Fundamental*, and others *not Fundamental*, may be demonstrated two ways; from the Nature of the thing, and from Scripture.

I. FROM the Nature of the thing. And truly unless we will allow this Distinction, we must say one of these two things; either that no Truths in Religion are Fundamental, and necessary to be known; or that all are so: neither of which can be allowed. That no Truths are necessary to be known, none but an Atheist can venture to affirm; and they who own the Being of a God, can do no less sure, than grant that the Knowledge of Him is necessary. The Subjects of any Kingdom or State cannot be ignorant without blame, that there is a Prince, or some Civil Magistrate under whom they live, and whom they are bound to obey. Nay, further, they ought to have a Knowledge of the Laws of that Kingdom or State; for every one knows, that Ignorance of the Law is no Excuse. But now, how much more necessary is it for us to know, as well as we are able, the Lord of the Universe,

Universe, and the Laws that are given us by him? And if it be necessary to know him, who is Lord of all, then it cannot but be displeasing to him, for us to entertain dishonourable Notions of him, or to charge him with the most detestable Crimes, to place him upon a level with the meanest of Creatures, and to pay him a Worship that consists of Wickedness or Cruelty. Neither is it to be thought, that in doing thus, we can possibly be innocent, and free from blame. And since all this might be said, tho we had no Revelation, how much more are these things necessary to be known now we have one, wherein God has manifested the certain Knowledge of himself, and appointed certain Worship to be paid him?

BUT on the other hand, that all Truths of Religion are Fundamental, and necessary to be known, is so absurd an Imagination, that no Man who seriously considers, can admit of it; for who can suppose, that God does necessarily require all Truths of Religion, without Exception, to be known of every individual Man; and consequently that all these Truths are equally to be esteemed and regarded by us? Who can imagine, that all Truths which depend upon Chronology, Geography, Criticism; that all proper Names in Scripture, and that all Circumstances, even of the minutest Events, which concern Religion, are necessary to be known? Certainly the Design of Religion, is not to exercise the Wit and Understandings of Men, nor to burden and overwhelm their Memories



mories with so vast a Number of all sorts of Truths ; but to implant in their Minds the Fear and Love of God, and excite them to certain Duties. Those Truths therefore, that tend most to this End, are certainly of the greatest Importance ; and they that have little or no tendency hereunto, are undoubtedly of less Moment, and so by no means to be accounted necessary.

A G A I N, they who say all Truths of Religion are Fundamental, and necessary to be known, in order to obtain Salvation, must either be tormented with endless Doubts and Perplexities, or imagine themselves to be infallible, so as certainly to know all Truths without Exception, and be sure, that they don't err in the least Point. And what Man in his Wits, can possibly pretend to this ? Finally, he who says all Truths of Religion are Fundamental, and all Errors damnable, ought to prove it : but the thing will admit of no sort of Proof ; nay, on the contrary, the Goodness and Wisdom of God do most directly oppose such an Assertion. Since therefore it cannot be affirmed on the one hand, that no Truths are *Fundamental*, nor on the other, that all are so ; hence it follows that a difference must be made between Truths that are *Fundamental*, and Truths that are not *Fundamental*.

II. T H I S is also evident from Scripture. For it can't be denied but the Apostle (a) does make

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(a) 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11, 12.



a plain Distinction between the *Foundation*, and *things built upon the Foundation*, and proceeds to shew, that things built upon the Foundation are of two sorts : some of them are good and profitable to Men ; these he calls *Gold, Silver, precious Stones* : others are useless, and really hurtful, such as vain and idle Disputes, rash and hasty Conclusions, and Ceremonies that lead to Superstition ; which he calls *Wood, Hay, and Stubble*. The former will *stand* and abide the fiery Trial, *i. e.* the Judgment of God : but the latter shall be *burnt up* ; yet the Authors or Promoters of such things, may be saved themselves, *tho so as by Fire*, *i. e.* not without Difficulty.

IN like manner, the Apostle distinguishes (a) between things wherein Christians agree, and according to which they ought to walk ; and things wherein good Men may differ, without any prejudice to Piety or mutual Love. *Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded ; namely, with regard to what he had before laid down concerning the Privileges and Ceremonies of the Law. But if in any thing you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you : Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing ; or be affected in the same manner, and preserve Peace and Union among ourselves. And accordingly the Apostles, in many Places of Scripture, teach us, that some things are of so great moment, that he who*

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(a) Phil. iii. 15, 16.

errs in them, and departs from the Doctrine of Christ, is not only to be sharply rebuked, but to be removed from the Communion of the Church (b). And these important Points are signified to us by various Appellations in Scripture; they are called, *the Foundation, the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, the first Principles of the Oracles of God, wholesome Doctrine, the Form of sound Words, the Word of Truth, the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, &c.* And so on the contrary, in other Places (c), we are told, that there are some things in which Persons who do err, ought nevertheless to be borne with as Brethren; of which we shall speak more hereafter.

NEITHER is this Distinction of the Points of Religion a new Thing, or a Notion peculiar to us; but has been allowed in all Ages, and by Divines of all Parties. The Jews undoubtedly had their Fundamental Truths, as appears from the Writings of their Rabbies. So *Moses Maimonides*, the most learned of them, entitles the first Book of his Treatise, call'd, *The Strong Hand*, thus; *Of the Foundations of the Law*: and begins it with these Words; *The Foundation of Foundations, and the Pillar of Wisdom, is to know, that there is one First Being, which gave being to all others.*

AND among the antient Fathers of the Church, nothing was more common than to

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(b) Gal. i. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 John v. 10.

(c) Rom. xiv. and xv.

use those Words, *the Principles, the Elements, the necessary Things*, to signify the primary and fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel. This is what *Tertullian* (\*) means, by *the Rule of Faith, the only immoveable and unchangeable Rule, which it is sufficient for a Man to know, tho he knows no more.* And (†) from these primary Articles, wherein *the Foundation of all Catholick Doctrine did consist, they distinguish'd the lesser Questions of the Divine Law, concerning which, Persons might have different Sentiments, without destroying the Unity of Faith.* And *Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Austin, &c.* give Testimonies concerning this Matter, which would be too tedious to recite.

H E N C E also Creeds and Confessions of Faith, and then Catechisms took their Rise; which contained the first Principles of Religion, such as it was thought proper for Catechumens, or Beginners to profess their Belief of. And in the first Ages these things were short and plain: but afterwards, through the Dissensions that arose in the Church, they were exceedingly multiplied and enlarged; insomuch that *Hilary* complained, that *Confessions were fram'd at every one's pleasure.*

THE Papists do carefully distinguish Questions which are *of the Faith*, from Questions which are *not of the Faith*; and pretend that the Power of determining the former lies in their Church;

(\*) *De Virgine velan. cap. I.*

(†) *Vincentius Lirinensis.*



and therefore that she may increase or diminish the Number of Articles of Faith at pleasure. And besides an *implicit* Faith, by which Persons are bound to believe whatever the Church believes, they say that some things are also to be believed *explicitly*; and accordingly dispute among themselves, about these Articles of Faith, which are to be believed *explicitly*, some making them more, some fewer; but others say that the Number of them cannot be determined. All which things do plainly shew, that tho they don't use the same Terms as we do, yet they don't reject or condemn the common Distinction, of *Fundamentals* and things *not Fundamental*.


*Lastly*, This Distinction is so obvious among Protestant Divines of different Parties, and has been so generally received amongst them, that it would be needless to mention any. Therefore without any further Confirmation of this famous Distinction, let us see what are the Marks or Criteria by which we may be able to distinguish *Fundamentals*, from things which are *not Fundamental*. And we shall first of all separate the *false Marks*, and then offer some Rules which appear to us *more just*.





## C H A P. III.

*False Marks of Fundamental Articles rejected.*

1.  H E Opinion of the Papiſts here firſt preſents itſelf, who pretend that all things which their Church determines *as of the Faith*, do immediately become Articles of Faith; and conſequently that the Church may by her Determinations and Decrees, increaſe the Number of them at pleaſure. But this Notion is eaſily deſtroy'd. For, *Firſt*, ſuch an Authority was never granted by God, to any Aſſembly of Men, nor to any private Teachers whatever. *Secondly*, the Apoſtles themſelves confeſs, that *they had no Dominion over the Faith of Chriſtians*, and that they *delivered nothing to them but what they had received of the Lord* (a). *Thirdly*, All Chriſtians are commanded (b) to examine whatever their Paſtors teach them, *to beware of falſe Prophets, to try all things, to hold faſt that which is good; and if an Angel from Heaven, or the Apoſtles themſelves, ſhould preach any other Goſpel, to pronounce them accuſed*. So that Paſtors of the Church have no Power to add even the leaſt Point to the Chriſtian Faith, much leſs to increaſe the Number of its Articles

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(a) 2 Cor. i. 24. (b) 1 Cor. xv. 3. Mat. vii. 15. 1 Theſ. v. 21. Gal. 1.8, 9.

at pleasure. *Fourthly*, The Church herself, or her Pastors, are so far from having a Power of altering them, or adding to their Number, that the true Church, and true Pastors thereof, can no otherwise be distinguished from others, than by considering whether they hold the Foundation or depart from it. This Mark therefore which the Papists bring, is altogether precarious, nay, Tyrannical and Antichristian; for 'tis certainly the greatest Tyranny, and most unsufferable Pride, to assume a Power of determining what is necessary to be known in order to Salvation, and in a Matter of so great Consequence, to add to the Word of God.

2. OTHERS are of opinion, that whatever is delivered in Scripture, is upon that very account Fundamental: and to this purpose they urge the Words of St. Paul (a), *Whatsoever things were written beforetime, were written for our Instruction*; and also those (b), *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*. But as has been already observed, who can imagine that all things found in Scripture of whatever sort, as proper Names of Men, Places, Animals, Plants, &c. and all Circumstances of the most minute Actions, are so necessary to be known, that none can be saved without the Knowledge of them? The Words of the Apostle carry no such Meaning: for the Sense of those Places is not that each Sentence

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(a) Rom. xv. 4.

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(b) 2 Tim. iii. 16.



Word, or Syllable, of Scripture, does contain something in them of the utmost Consequence to Christianity, and so that all these are necessary to be known: But only that the Doctrine contained in that Book, and the principal things deliver'd there, are to be for our Instruction above all other things; and that whatever is necessary for our Instruction, Exhortation, or Correction, is fully contained in it. Yea, the Apostle does largely shew in another place (c) that we ought *to bear the Infirmities of the Weak*. And those Words, *for whatsoever things were written, &c.* are added for no other purpose, but to shew us, that by the Instructions of Scripture we are to learn a Christian Meekness and Forbearance; which very thing does prove that Disagreement in Matters of less Importance, altho they are things contained in Scripture, ought not to be accounted Fundamental.

3. Another Mark which many make use of, to distinguish Fundamentals from such as are not so, is taken from what they call the *Analogy of Faith*, or, which is the same thing, Systems of Divinity, in which some take one Method, and some another. We shall only bring an Instance or two out of them, to illustrate this matter. Some therefore talk after this manner: those things which contain the Causes of Salvation, are for that very reason necessary to be known, in order to Salvation; but say these Men, in the Causes of Salvation, three things are to be dis-

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(c) Rom. xv. 4. and all the xivth chap.

tinctly considered, the Design, the Purchase, and the Application of it. The Design is laid in God's eternal Predestination; the Purchase is made through the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ, and the Application by the Power and Operation of the Holy Spirit: and then they proceed to infer, that not only these things themselves, but all Questions appertaining to them, are necessary to be known in order to Salvation. Others argue thus; Christ is the Foundation, according to that of the Apostle (a), *Other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*. But say they, in Christ there are several things to be distinctly considered; as, his Person, twofold Nature, different States, his Offices, Benefits, &c. To which Heads it is very plain, that innumerable Questions, if not all in Divinity may easily be refer'd. But they who argue in this manner, tho they say nothing but what is true, and indeed of very great Moment, yet their Mistake lies in this; they confound what was necessary to be done in order to procure Salvation, with what is necessary to be known: which two things are very different; as is plain, by considering the Case of Infants, of Persons that are deaf, or distracted, and of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament. The thing may be illustrated by a Similitude taken from our Food: every one knows that abundance of things are requisite to the Digestion and Separation of our Food; and yet no

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(a) 1 Cor. iii, 11.

body ever said that these things were necessary to be known, in order to receive Nourishment from it.

HITHERTO we have rejected those Marks, which to us seem faulty, by containing too much. There are others no less faulty, for requiring too little: From these therefore the next Mark is taken, *viz.*

4. THOSE things only are Fundamental, which have been received by all Christians, and in all Ages. If this Rule be right, I fear it will utterly destroy all Fundamentals at once; for from the very Times of the Apostles, there have been Teachers who have called themselves Christians, and yet have attempted to overthrow some of the principal and most necessary things in Christianity. Thus some have denied the Resurrection of the Body (*a*), and some that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh (*b*); some have affirmed that the Ceremonies of the Law are necessary to Salvation, and others have even denied the Necessity of Good Works; as is evident from many Places in the Epistles: So that many of the Teachers of those Times, even of those who called themselves Christians, are said to be *Antichrists, Lyars, false Prophets, denying the Lord that bought them.* And every one knows, that not long after, there arose many pestilent Sects among Christians; as the *Gnosticks*, the *Marcionites*, the *Manichees*, who impudently deny'd some Doctrines of the utmost Impor-

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(*a*) 1 Cor. xv. 2 Tim. ii. 18. (*b*) 1 John iv. 3.



tance, as the Unity of God, the Necessity of Good Works, and of suffering Martyrdom in defence of the Truth when called to it. If this Rule therefore, which we now oppose, be true, it will hardly leave any thing at all that is Fundamental.

5. S O M E limit the Foundation of Religion within such narrow Bounds, that they allow nothing to be a Fundamental, but to obey the Divine Precepts, and to trust in the Promises of the Gospel; which is another Mark that we reject. We own indeed, that Obedience is the End, and therefore a principal Part of Religion; for as Christ told his Disciples (a), *if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*; and St. Paul testifies (b), that *the End of the Commandment is Charity*; and St. James (c), *Pure Religion and undefiled, is to visit the Fatherless and Widows, and to keep one's self unspotted from the World*. But if we would speak accurately, we cannot say that the whole Essence of Religion does consist in Obedience, and Trust in God, and in nothing else: for there must be some Truths known by the Light of Nature, and others revealed by God, upon which our Obedience and Trust must be founded; which do therefore make part of the Foundation, according as St. Paul teaches us in that forecited Place (d), *He that comes to God, must believe that he is, &c.* And Christ (e), *This is eternal Life*

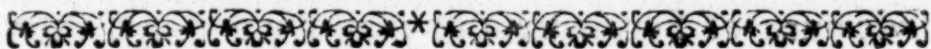
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(a) Joh. xiii. 17. (b) 1 Tim. i. 5. (c) Jam. i. 27. (d) Heb. xi. 6. (e) John xvii. 3.

to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.


6. SOME will have the Apostle's Creed, as it is commonly called, to be the Standard and Measure of Fundamentals; and we don't deny but this Hypothesis comes the nearest to Truth, of which more hereafter; yet for some Reasons we cannot entirely acquiesce in this Opinion. For, *First*, It is agreed among learned Men, that this Creed was not compos'd by the Apostles, but long after their Time, and that the Copies of it differ'd in some Articles; there is therefore no reason why so much Authority should be given to a human Composure, tho ever so antient and venerable, as that the Terms of Salvation should be thought to depend upon it. *Secondly*, Neither does every thing inserted into this Creed seem to be of so great Importance, that a Man cannot be saved without the Knowledge thereof. Thus, if a Person should be ignorant of what is there said of Christ's Descent into Hell, of the Name of *Pontius Pilate*, and some other things which were put in, in opposition to some Errors that are now out of date, it cannot be thought that his Salvation would be hazarded hereby. *Thirdly*, On the other hand, there are some things no less necessary to be known than to be done, which yet are wanting in this Creed, *viz.* those Principles of Religion which direct and inform our Practice. Therefore passing by these and such like Criteria, which are not founded upon sufficient Reason, we shall endeavour

endeavour to produce some Rules which seem to be better grounded, and may more safely be depended upon.



## C H A P. IV.

*Some Principles laid down, by which we may be able to distinguish Fundamental Articles from those which are not Fundamental.*

- I.  UR first Principle is this; *That we are not under a necessary Obligation to know, or believe any Truth, but what is clearly revealed unto us, and for the belief of which, God hath indued us with necessary Abilities.* This is a Principle of most undoubted Truth; for who can conceive, that a most righteous God, who has the tenderest Concern for his Creatures, should require them to believe any thing which he has not revealed to them, and that clearly too, or which they are under a natural Incapacity of believing? It is reported indeed of *Caligula*, among other horrible Cruelties, that he ordered his Laws to be writ in such small Characters, and to be hung up at so great a Distance, that it was almost, if not altogether impossible to read them; and this he contrived on purpose, that a greater Number of Offenders might fall into his hands. But far be it from us, to ascribe such a cruel and injurious Way of pro-



proceeding to the best and most righteous Being.

FROM this Principle we may draw an Inference which is of very considerable Weight, viz. *That Fundamental Articles are not the same to all Men, but differ according to the different Degrees of Revelation, and according to the different Capacities and Circumstances of Men.* The Reason is plain: for since God has made very different Revelations of himself, and has given very different Capacities to Men, and has plac'd them in Stations and Circumstances that most widely differ; it is therefore impossible that all Men should be obliged to the same Measure of Knowledge, or the same Standard of Faith.

2. Our second Principle is this, *That he alone, who is Lord of Life and Death, that is, God, has power to determine what is necessary to be believed in order to obtain Salvation, and what Error shall certainly exclude Men from it.* This also is a very plain Principle, and none who seriously consider it, can call it into question; for who, I pray, has the least Pretensions to settle the Terms of Life and Death, but that *only Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy (a) ?* From whence the Apostle makes this demand, *Who art thou that judgest another (b) ?*

BUT since God has made known his Will two ways, by the Light of Nature, and by Revelation, nothing therefore ought to be reckon-

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(a) James iv. 12. (b) Compare Rom. xiv. 10.

ed a Fundamental, but what God has determined to be so, one of these two ways.

AND the Light of Nature discovers but very few things in this matter ; little more than what the Apostle takes notice of as a thing sufficiently known thereby, *That he who comes to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him* (c). And should a Man be well established in these two Principles, and the things which are plainly connected with them, and sincerely endeavour to know the Will of God, and to put in practice what he did know ; I very much question whether such a one could remain ignorant of any Principle which can be proved necessary from the Light of Nature.

BUT Revelation goes further, and enjoins some Points to be believed as things necessary to Salvation, and dissuades us from believing others upon pain of Damnation. It tells us, *That eternal Life is placed in the Knowledge of certain Truths ; That he who believes them, does please God, is blessed, and shall be saved, &c.* but he who does not believe them, shall be damned, *cannot please God, is yet in his Sins, and the Wrath of God abides upon him* : from which Places we may conclude, that these are Fundamental Articles, and necessary to be known of all, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are endued with sufficient Faculties to receive it.

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(c) Heb. 11. 6.

3. B U T besides those Points which are expressly, and in so many words declared to be necessary ; *Those things likewise which flow from these Principles, by plain and necessary Consequence, must be added to the Catalogue of Fundamentals or Things necessary.* For plain and necessary Consequences are of the same Nature with their Principles ; they are to be ranked with them, and allowed to be of equal Importance ; nay, they are as it were contained in them, and properly speaking, do not differ from them. Thus, upon granting the Being of God, the chief Attributes of the Deity do so plainly and necessarily result from it, that they can't but be thought to be of equal Moment with the Principle itself.

B U T let it be observed, that we speak only of *plain and necessary Consequences* : for it would be very unreasonable to rank doubtful, or obscure, or remote Consequences, with the Principles themselves, and to shew an equal regard to them ; for at this rate, all things would be put upon the same bottom, and there would be no end of Fundamental Articles.

A N D this seems to us the true and only Way, by which we may clearly and safely distinguish Fundamental Articles from others, *viz.* by the Discovery of the Divine Will, and the Declarations of God himself, either in express Words, or by plain and necessary Consequence ; for, as has been already observed, Who shall pretend to settle the Terms of Salvation and Damnation ? Who shall pretend to make Laws concerning these things, but He, and He alone who

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has



has power to save, and power to destroy? And therefore they who impose upon Christians, things as Fundamental, which God has not revealed, or which are doubtful and obscure, as the Church of *Rome* does, and others who follow her Steps; these, whoever they are, act tyrannically, and in an impious manner arrogantly claim that Authority to themselves which belongs to God only.

BUT tho this be the chief, if not the only Mark of Fundamental Articles, yet that we may more easily and certainly distinguish them, we shall subjoin some other Principles.

4. *FUNDAMENTALS* are plain, adapted to common Capacities, and free from all the subtle and intricate Distinctions of the Schools. The Reason is evident; for since Religion does equally concern all Men, and is no less designed for common People than for the Learned, yea, it may be more; whatever therefore does exceed the Capacity of the Vulgar, is upon that account not to be reckoned Fundamental, or necessary. Religion certainly differs from scholastick Niceties as much as any thing: The Scripture was given by poor plain Men, and it is given to such. Christ gives thanks, that *these things were hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto Babes*: and St. Paul tells us, that there were *not many wise among the Corinthians*; by which he diligently admonishes us to distinguish carefully the Doctrines of Heaven from the Wisdom of the World. So that, to use the Words of Hilary, *the faith lies in great plainness*

plainness of Speech; for God does not call us to Happiness by difficult and knotty Questions, nor does he persuade us by various Turns of Oratory and Eloquence. Eternity lies in a plain and narrow Compass; to believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and to confess that he is Lord (a).

5. FUNDAMENTALS are few in number. This Principle is founded upon the same Reason as the former; for the Minds of common People would be as much confounded by a Multitude, as by the Difficulty of Articles: Therefore it has pleased divine Goodness to comprize them in a narrow Compass; that, as St. Austin says, the plainness of them might suit the simplicity of the Hearers; that the shortness of them might be accommodated to their Memories, and that the fulness of them might make amends for their want of Learning. And so Casaubon, in the Name of King James I. of Great Britain, writes thus; *The King thinks it very right, in the Explication of things simply necessary to Salvation, to say that the Number of them is not great* (b).

6. FUNDAMENTALS are very often and various ways repeated and inculcated in Scripture. This is a Rule that we infer from the Goodness and Condescension of God: for since Scripture is given for this end only, to make us wise to Salvation, it can't be doubted but those things that chiefly tend hereunto, are frequently proposed in Scripture, and strongly urged up-

(a) Hilarius de Trinitate L. 10. in fin.  
Card. Perron.

(b) Casaub. Epist. ad

on us. In any other Sciences, honest and skilful Masters do not use to pass over slightly and hastily, the first Principles; but frequently repeat and inculcate them, till they find they are clearly understood, and have taken fast root in the Minds of their Scholars. And who can doubt but God, the supreme and infinitely wise Instructor of Men, does use the like Caution and Prudence, in giving them his heavenly Precepts?

7. *FUNDAMENTALS* are Principles of Piety; that is, they don't only not contradict the Practice of Godliness, but on the contrary, are useful, and even necessary to promote it. And truly the End of Religion is nothing else but to make us holy. This is the Design of the whole Gospel; herein the Mysteries, the Precepts, the Promises, and Threatnings of it do all centre: upon which account the Gospel is called, *The Mystery of Godliness, a Doctrine which is according to Godliness*; and we are assured that nothing else will avail us but *the new Creature, or Obedience to the Commandments of God*. Hence then it follows, that whatsoever is of no use to promote Godliness, for that very reason is not a Fundamental Truth; and on the other hand, that whatever destroys Godliness, or is inconsistent therewith, is a Fundamental Error. But let it be observed, we don't say, that whatever may conduce to Godliness, is therefore a Fundamental; for there are many things which may be pious, or at least have the appearance of Piety, that are not at all essential to Christianity;



anity ; nay, and if thoroughly examined into, some of them would not be found true, of which sort are the many Fables and Figments of Mens Brains ; which the Experience of all Ages abundantly shews.

8. *A Thing may often be Fundamental itself, tho the Mode and Circumstances of it are not so.* This follows from the foregoing Principles ; for when a thing is only revealed to us in general, and enjoined us by God as necessary, then the thing itself only is to be accounted a Fundamental without its Mode and Circumstances, which are not revealed with equal Evidence, or the like Marks of Necessity. And indeed there are very few things, especially in Divinity, the Mode and Circumstances of which we can thoroughly understand. If therefore the Mode and Circumstances, the Causes and Adjuncts of a thing, are to be accounted Fundamental, it will follow that abundance of things, of which we can have no clear Perceptions, and which do far exceed our Capacities, are nevertheless Fundamental, contrary to what has been observed, in *Prin.* 1 and 4.

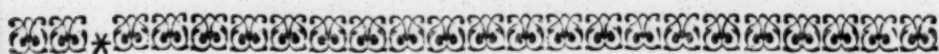
9. *PERSONS may err fundamentally two ways ; not only by expressly denying a thing that is Fundamental, but also by adding to, or building something upon the Foundation that does really weaken and overturn it.* This Principle we have already treated of, *Chap. I.* and the Reason of it is evident ; for 'tis not sufficient to acknowledge Fundamental Truths with our Lips, if we actually overturn them, by Positions or Actions contrary to them.

Thus,

Thus, what can it signify for a Man to profess that God only is to be worshipped, if at the same time he does actually worship Creatures, as Saints and Angels, Images, Crosses, &c. after the manner of the Heathens themselves?

10. T O these Principles, which seem to contribute not a little towards a right distinguishing of Fundamentals, let us only add one more, which may serve as a Rule to manage and form our Judgments, both of ourselves and others; namely, *With respect to ourselves, our safest way is to beware and guard against all, even the smallest Errors, as if they were Fundamental; and to make the utmost progress in the Knowledge of divine Truths; but with regard to others, we ought to pronounce nothing but with the utmost Caution, the greatest Charity, and Meekness.* For as Prudence directs Men to use the greatest Care and Diligence in providing for their own Safety; so on the contrary, Christian Charity will not suffer a Man to condemn others, and charge them with damnable Errors, till he is compell'd to it by the irresistible Evidence of the thing itself, and of the Oracles of God; and then not without Unwillingness and great Reluctance.





## C H A P. V.

*Whether the exact Number of Fundamental Articles can be determin'd.*

**T**HIS Question is a very perplex'd one, yet ought not to be wholly omitted by us, *viz. Whether the exact and precise Number of Fundamental Articles can be determin'd.* We doubt not, but those Articles may be sufficiently distinguish'd by every one for his own private Use and Instruction; and accordingly have laid down Rules in the foregoing Chapter, which will help us to a Knowledge of them: But to reduce them to a certain and definite Number, so as to be able to say there are neither more nor less, is more than we, together with all Protestant Divines, think to be either necessary or possible, for the following Reasons.

1. **B E C A U S E** these Articles are not the same to all Men; some were Fundamental under the Old Testament, others are so under the New. Some are Fundamental to those who have the use of their Senses and Reason; others to Infants, Children, deaf Persons, and those of a weak Understanding. Some are Fundamental to those who enjoy a perfect Liberty of hearing the Word of God; others are so to multitudes in the World, from whom the Gospel is in a great



great measure hid, as thousands of Peasants inhabiting the Villages of *Spain* and *Portugal*. Some are Fundamental to Beginners, and as it were Children in Christ; others to Persons of a greater Proficiency, such as those *Jews* ought to have been, whom the Apostle reproves for their Dulness in Learning (a). So that as it would be absurd to expect that one common Garment should suit all Statures, or the same Portion of Food all Appetites, or the same Degrees of Labour all Artists; so it is impossible to fix a certain Number of Articles necessary to be known of all Men.

2. BECAUSE these Articles are sometimes fewer and more general, sometimes more numerous and particular; which depends upon the different Method of conceiving and distinguishing things. Thus in Scripture we find things necessary to Salvation are sometimes reduced to a single Head, sometimes to two, sometimes to more. In one place we are told that nothing is necessary to be known by us, *but Christ crucified* (b); in another, that *eternal Life consists in knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent* (c). Sometimes all things are refer'd to *Christ's Resurrection alone*; at other times only to *his coming in the Flesh*. Sometimes *Faith alone* is required; at other times *Faith and Repentance*: sometimes *Faith that works by Love*, sometimes *a new Creature*, and sometimes the whole Law is said to

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(a) Heb. v. 12. (b) 1 Cor. ii. 2. (c) John xvii. 3.

be fulfilled in *Charity* only. All which sufficiently shews, that things necessary to Salvation are sometimes reduced to fewer Heads, and at other times divided into more; and therefore can't be fixed to a certain Number, which shall always necessarily remain the same.

3. B E C A U S E it may oftentimes be justly questioned, whether any particular Doctrine ought to be placed among Fundamentals; as a Consequence drawn from an important Place of Scripture, or a particular Exposition of some general Doctrine. Examples might be brought from moral Subjects. Thus many difficult Questions have been started about Usury, Lying, Gaming, of the Measure we ought to observe in giving Alms, and many other such things. And if so many Difficulties arise about Subjects of a practical Nature, how should it be otherwise in Matters that are speculative? And who, but a Person of consummate Assurance, would venture to determine the exact Weight and Importance of each of these Questions, and to settle their precise Bounds, with respect to our Salvation or Damnation?

4. A S it can't certainly be determin'd, what is the exact Pitch of Vertue, or just how many sorts of Duties, what number of good Works, pious Discourses, Almsdeeds, &c. are necessarily required of every Man that he may be saved; so either can such weak and imperfect Creatures as we are, without the utmost Arrogance, pretend to determine precisely, what Degrees of Knowledge are absolutely requisite

hereunto. Let them tell us what are the farthest Lengths allowable in these things; let them mark out the exact Bounds of things necessary, and unnecessary, who can comprehend the Divine Perfections, and know the utmost Limits of the Justice and Mercy of God. For our part, we freely own it is far above our reach to do it. And here, to use the Words of the famous *Witsius* (a), *sometimes* (says he) *Divine Grace does join the Elect to Christ, by a very slender Thred; and yet the brightest Flames of Love to God, and the most sincere Desires to please him, may be kindled in those Souls that have but a very poor Knowledge of Articles of Faith. And who is he, that without the Determinations of God, can himself exactly determine that least single Point in each Article, by which the Divine Tribunal is indispensably obliged to proceed?*

5. **W H A T** has been said concerning Religion, and the necessary Articles of it, may be illustrated from other Arts and Sciences. Who, for instance, ever told us precisely, how many Truths are necessary to be known, to get a Man a Reputation in Logick, or Mathematicks, or Law? Or who has ever determin'd the precise Quantity of Food, and no more, that is necessary to support Life? And yet there is no great danger of our being starved for want of this Knowledge. Or who has ever told us how many sorts of Food, and how many sorts of Poisons there are in the World? And yet with-

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(a) *Wits. in Symb. Apost. Exercit. II, §. 15.*



out knowing it, we may take our Food safely enough, and sufficiently guard against being poisoned. And why may not the same Judgment be allowed concerning saving Truths, and poisonous Errors?

BUT perhaps some will say, how can the Conscience of a Christian be easy, without being satisfied in this Enquiry, *How many Truths precisely he ought to know, that he may be saved?* I'll answer in a word: Let a Man but sincerely love Truth, and seek it heartily, begging Help from God, and making use of those who are capable of giving him Light; and let him not omit, or neglect any proper Means, that he may make continual Progress in the Ways of Truth and Holiness; and such a one may certainly conclude, that God will not be wanting to him, nor suffer him to continue ignorant of any thing necessary for him to know: Or if he is ignorant of any Matter, or does err and mistake in some things, God will graciously pardon him, even as a Father does his Children.





## C H A P. VI.

*Church Communion cannot be maintain'd between those who differ in Fundamentals.*

**W**E are now to consider how we ought to carry it, either towards those who *differ from us in Fundamentals*, or towards those who *differ in things not Fundamental*.

AS to the former, there is no doubt but that all just and proper Means ought to be used with them, to convince them of their Errors, and to bring them to a sound Mind; but if these prove ineffectual, and we cannot converse with them, without apparent danger of being infected ourselves, we ought not only to abstain from the private Conversation of such Persons, but also from their Church Communion.

T H E R E are several express Commands in Scripture to this purpose, besides many weighty Reasons, which might be brought to confirm it.

A M O N G other Places of Scripture, these are very evident: (a) *Tho we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* (b) *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers; for what Fellowship has Righteous-*

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(a) Gal. i. 8, 9. (b) 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

*ness with Unrighteousness? And what Communion has Light with Darknes? And what Concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believeth with an Infidel? Or what Agreement has the Temple of God with Idols? These Words are indeed primarily meant of Unbelievers and Heathen Idolaters; but yet they may equally be understood of those who imitate the Heathen in their Idolatry and Superstition. (c) Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark those which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. (d) If any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing; from such withdraw thy self. (e) An Heretick, after the first and second Admonition, reject. (f) If there come any unto you and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your House, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil Deeds. (g) And I heard another Voice from Heaven, saying, come out of her my People, that ye be not partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.*

**A N D** there are several weighty Reasons which might be brought to confirm this Matter; from the Nature of the Church; from the Regard we owe to God; from the Decency and Order of Divine Worship; from the Care we

(c) Rom. xvi. 17. (d) 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. (e) Tit. iii. 10.

(f) 2 John v. 10, 11.

(g) Rev. xviii. 4.



ought to take of our own Souls; from the Obligation we are under to do all we can towards recovering the Erroneous, and to give a good Example to others: But these things we can but barely mention, consistent with our designed Brevity.



## C H A P. VII.

*Church Communion ought to be maintained, and mutual Forbearance practis'd among those who differ not in Fundamentals.*

**T**HE Case is much otherwise with respect to those who *differ only in Points not Fundamental*. It were indeed greatly to be desired, that there was no Disagreement at all among Christians, and that the Truths of God were equally discovered and known of all Men: but since this is never to be expected, because of the Variety of Mens Minds, the different Methods of Education, and the Frailty of human Understanding; that which comes the nearest to it, is, That we should endeavour to secure the Essence of Religion, and then patiently bear with one another in all the rest; and that Persons who differ in things not Fundamental, should regard each other as Brethren, and maintain Church Communion together, and shew a Christian Forbearance on all sides. To this purpose

purpose there are plain Texts of Scripture, and many other Arguments of the greatest Force.

A N D among other Places of Scripture where such Forbearance is enjoined, *Chap. 14.* and part of *15.* of the Epistle to the *Romans*, deserve our greatest regard: where the Apostle, taking occasion from the Differences that arose among the primitive Christians, about the Ceremonies of the Law, and the Distinctions of Meats and Days, commands that *the weak in Faith*, i. e. those who had not right Sentiments of these things, should nevertheless be received by the rest as Brethren, and admitted as true Members of the Church, not *despis'd* nor *condemn'd*, but *their Infirmities* tolerated (*a.*) And that he might bring the *Roman* Christians to such a Temper, he argues with them so affectionately, so strongly and copiously, and draws such odious Consequences from the contrary Practice, (shewing them that hereby the Authority of God himself would be invaded, that *those for whom Christ died would be destroyed*, and that *the Work of God would be destroyed*, &c.) as plainly shews how much he had this at heart, and that this Forbearance of disagreeing Parties ought to be ranked among the first, and most important Duties of the Christian Religion.

A N D not only in that Place, but in several Parts of his Epistles, he earnestly recommends the same Duty. Thus in *Chap. viii. 9, 10.* of the 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians*, discoursing of

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(a) Rom. XIV. 1, 3, 4, 10. XV. 1.

things sacrificed to Idols, he shews that Christians who had not right Sentiments, ought not only to be patiently borne with, but that others ought to accommodate themselves to their Weakness; and testifies of himself, that this was his own Practice (a): *For tho I am free from all Men, yet have I made myself Servant to all, that I might gain the more: and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law; that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law; to the Weak became I as weak, that I might gain the Weak: I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all Means save some.* And in the following Verses he signifies that he was obliged thus to act, in order to his being Partaker of the heavenly Reward. Whence it follows, that let a Man be ever so religious, and take ever so much pains in preaching the Gospel, yet if at the same time he wants this Gentleness and Forbearance towards his Brethren who differ from him, he can neither be accepted of God, nor obtain Salvation at last.

AND who that reads that excellent Commendation of Charity, with which the whole 13th Chapter of that Epistle is taken up, can chuse but be excited to practise this Duty of Forbearance? Some of the chief Characters there given of Charity, are, (b) *that it suffers*

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(a) 1 Cor. IX. 20, 21, 22.

(b) V. 4, 7.



*long, that it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

And if this Description be given with respect to the Vices of Men, and their Defects in Goodness, it's certainly no less applicable to Errors, especially to light ones, and such as do not at all affect the Foundation of Religion.

I T is true indeed, the Apostle in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, is very severe against some false Teachers; which yet does not weaken, but really confirm the Necessity of this Forbearance and Toleration. For those Teachers were themselves against tolerating others, and would have the Ceremonies of the Law imposed upon all Christians, as things necessary to Salvation; by which means the Christian Faith would have been greatly corrupted. And at the same time that he so sharply inveighs against these Teachers, he is very large in recommending Charity and Forbearance, even in so great a Diversity of Opinions as this was (b); and commands *that they who were overtaken in a Fault, should be restor'd in the Spirit of Meekness*; and that *they should bear one another's Burdens* (c). And at last, when he had told them that the Essence of Christianity did not consist in *Circumcision*, or *Uncircumcision*, i. e. in observing or omitting the Ceremonies of the Law, *but in the New Creature*, i. e. in true and real Holiness; he adds these Words, wherein he most affectionately de-

(b) Gal. V. 13, 14, 15.

(c) Gal. VI. 1, 2.

fires, as well as commands, a mutual Forbearance among Persons who differ in things not Fundamental; *and as many as walk according to this Rule, i. e. that agree in the Essentials of Christianity, and form their Lives according to this Rule, Peace be upon them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God (a).* If therefore the Apostle does pray for Peace, and promises Mercy to such Persons, is it not unreasonable to condemn them, to send them to the Pit of Hell, or to exclude them the Communion of the Church?

BUT there is no Place where this Forbearance or Toleration of Persons disagreeing only in things not Fundamental, is more plainly enjoined, than that which has been already cited out of the Epistle to the *Philippians (b)*, where every one may see that the Apostle would have *Christians walk by the same Rule in things whereto they have attained, that is, in Fundamentals; and to mind the same thing; but if in any thing they were otherwise minded, to wait till God should please to reveal it to those who were in an Error, and bring them to a more perfect Knowledge of the Truth; yet in the mean time holding fast the Bond of Christian Fellowship and Charity with one another.* In like manner, that pathetick Exhortation to Love and Unity, which we have in the beginning of the second Chapter of the same Epistle, is given for the same end.

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(a) Gal. VI. 15, 16.

(b) Phil. III. 15, 16.

And lastly, the Apostle enjoins it upon Christians (a), *to let their Moderation be known unto all Men*, i. e. their Meekness and Gentleness in bearing the Infirmities and Deficiencies of others.

AND no doubt these Exhortations *to forbear one another with all Lowliness and Meekness, to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, to speak the Truth in Love, to put away all Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamour, Evil-speaking, and to put on Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, that so they might forbear one another, and forgive one another* (b); no doubt, I say, but these, and such like Exhortations, of which all the Epistles are full, were principally designed to lay the Heats and Contentions between the Judaizing and other Christians, with which the Churches of those Times were greatly molested; the proper Remedy for which, if we regard the Apostles, was nothing else but mutual Forbearance, which Christians ought to exercise when differing from one another.

AND if we turn our Thoughts to the following Circumstances, we shall plainly perceive of how great Weight these things are, to recommend the like Forbearance among Christians in these Days. 1. The Apostles were infallible, and if they would not attempt to compose these Differences, by exerting their Au-

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(a) Phil. IV. 5. (b) Ephes. IV. 2. 3, 15, 31, 32. Col. III. 12, 13.



thority, but chose to recommend Forbearance on both sides, how much more should we take the like Course, who have not the least Pretences to Infallibility? 2. The Dispute was not about a Trifle, but a very weighty Affair, even the Difference between the Law and the Gospel; a thing that did not consist in meer Speculation, but had a great Influence both upon Practice and Worship. Alas! How many trivial Controversies, in comparison of this, do soure the Minds of Christians in these Days? 3. Both Sides were furnished with very considerable Arguments, the one a Law given by God, the other the Defence of Christian Liberty. 4. St. *Paul* himself, who so strenuously urged this Forbearance, had before such a flaming Zeal for the Law, that he was even mad for it. 5. *Lastly*, these Precepts of Forbearance were given after the Vision from Heaven to *Peter*, and after the Apostolic Synod; so that these Controversies had been sufficiently determined already, by this Vision, and by the Decree of the Apostles. Whoever therefore shall seriously consider these Circumstances, and weigh them impartially, can't surely but conclude, that these Apostolical Precepts of Forbearance, if they had any Weight in their Times, ought to have much more in our Times, and in the present Controversies.

I N short, wherever Christ and his Apostles recommend Charity, Meekness, or the Love of Peace; and on the contrary dissuade us from Contentions, Quarrels and Schisms, &c. in all those

those Places, it is most certain this Forbearance is enjoined us. But that the Necessity of it may more clearly appear, we shall add to these Testimonies of Scripture, some Reasons of very great Weight, which we shall but just mention, and leave the fuller Explication of them to the judicious and pious Reader.

1. IT is our Duty to cultivate Communion with all the Disciples of Christ; for Christ will have all his Disciples to be one (a), and the Church is represented as *one Body*, in several Places of Scripture: Therefore Communion ought to be maintain'd with all those whom we don't know to be unworthy the Name of Christians: And certainly they can't be accounted unworthy of it, who hold all the Fundamentals, and differ from us only in things which are not Fundamental.

2. THOSE things wherein Christians do agree, who are united in Fundamentals, are things of so great Importance, and Dignity, that all other things are not considerable enough to disturb their Peace, and to separate them from one another. This Argument the Apostle pursues with a great deal of Life and Spirit, in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* (b); and nothing, I think, can more effectually press this Duty of Forbearance, than what he there saith: *I (says the Apostle) the Prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye*

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(a) John XVII. 11, 21, 22, 23. (b) Eph. IV. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

*are called, with all Lowliness, and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* For, adds he, *There is one Body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one Hope of your Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* If Persons agree with us in such things as these, and are impress'd with the Weight and Importance of them as they ought to be, we shall be injurious to ourselves, and reflect Dishonour upon Christ, if we refuse to own and esteem them as Brethren.

3. **W I T H O U T** this Forbearance, which we recommend, it is impossible that any Peace or Unity should continue long in the Church: For there are but two Ways of obtaining Peace, either by *Uniformity of Opinion*, or by exercising *Forbearance* towards those who err in smaller Matters. The former is an impracticable thing; for such is the Variety of Mens Minds, their Education and Capacities so different, and things themselves do often appear in such different Views, that for all Persons to have just the same Sentiments in all Points, is a thing utterly to be despair'd of: It has never yet been seen from the first beginnings of the Church, unto the present times, nor ever will to the World's End. We must therefore have recourse to Forbearance of those who err in lesser Matters, as ever we desire to see the Church enjoy Peace and Tranquillity.

4. **E I T H E R**



4. **EITHER** we are to break off Communion for all, and every Diversity of Opinion; or for some only. No one will say the former; for at this rate, there would be as many Churches and Sects in the World, as there are private Christians. But if for some only, what other Bounds or Distinction can be settled than this; that those things which belong to the Essence and Foundation of Religion, should be inviolably adhered unto; but that things which do not concern the Foundation, should be left as Matters of Forbearance?

5. **EITHER** we believe that those who differ from us in things not Fundamental, are odious to God, and shall be damned, or we do not: And certainly it would discover a very bitter Spirit, and the utmost Rashness, to judge the former; but if we believe the latter, Why should we hate and reject them? If we believe that God does accept them as Children, why should not we regard them as Brethren? If we believe they will praise God with us in Heaven, why should we be unwilling that they should worship him with us on Earth?

6. **EITHER** we believe that all things in Religion are at present fully made known, and that there is no room left for any further Discoveries; or we believe that there may be some Improvements of Knowledge, and that it's possible some Amendments may be made to the common received Opinions. To say the former would be exceeding rash, and a Supposition not consistent with the State of human Affairs;  
nay,

nay, such a Piece of intolerable Pride, as has always met with Indignation from Men truly learned ; for *now we know but in part, and prophesy in part*, as the Apostle says. If therefore Improvements may yet be made, we ought by all means to bear patiently with those that offer us any thing new ; for otherwise we suppress all Improvements, and stifle the Gift of Prophecy, and bring in Sloth and Barbarity ; for who will attempt any thing of this kind, when it becomes dangerous to do it ?

7. **T H E** want of this Forbearance does not really remove Differences of Opinion, but only makes Persons who differ from the received Notions, to conceal their Sentiments, yea, and very often to speak contrary to the Sense of their Minds ; which is such a Reproach to good Men, and especially to Ministers of the Gospel, as can never be sufficiently lamented. But it will be said, that this is their Fault who do so ; and undoubtedly it is : but yet they can never be thought innocent, who, by vigorous Severities, lay such strong Temptations before Men to Hypocrisy.

8. **T O L E R A T I O N** is the greatest Friend to Truth, and the contrary its greatest Enemy ; for if the Strong will not bear with the Weak, neither will the Weak bear with the Strong ; for every Man counts himself strong, and thus all will come to condemn, and to execute one another : by which Means Truth itself will be banished out of many Parts of the World. On the contrary, if Toleration did every

every where prevail, Truth would have its full Scope, and easily gain ground, by the Force of its own Arguments.

9. GENTLENESS and Forbearance is the most likely Method to bring those that err, to an acknowledgment of the Truth, and the contrary Method no less likely to hinder both their Instruction and Amendment: For by condemning and banishing them our Communion, we make them to hate us, and to suspect every thing whatever we offer to them; but if we deal gently with them, and cease not to own them as Brethren, they will regard us as their Friends, and more readily and impartially consider what we propose for their Conviction.

10. FROM want of this Forbearance, arise Hatred, Strife, Quarrels, and Schisms in Churches and Universities, and Tumults in Civil Society. Perhaps it may be said, that Schisms are more likely to arise from the Toleration of different Opinions; but if the thing be duly considered, it will appear that all these Evils have arisen not from Toleration or Forbearance, which is in itself a meek and harmless thing, but from a contrary Spirit, which if once laid aside, Persons might at any time entertain different Sentiments, and yet preserve a hearty Love for one another.

11. PRIVATE Christians, but especially Ministers, who are engaged and taken up in these Controversies, are obliged to neglect several things, wherein their Labour might be employed to much better Purpose, and where it



is more needed; but especially the Life of Religion does greatly suffer and decay by this means.

12. W A N T of this Forbearance does make the different Sects of Christians forget to stand up for one another, and so to disregard, and even give up the common Interest. Therefore the Emperor *Julian*, that he might engage Christians in their mutual Destruction, sent for the chief Heads of the different Sects, and set them on quarrelling together; knowing well enough, as (a) *Ammianus Marcellinus* testifies, *That no savage Beasts are more cruel to Men, than most Christians are to others.* And surely no one can be ignorant, how much the Protestant Cause has been weakned, by intestine Divisions.

13. T H E S E Differences and Animosities give great Offence: Wicked Men take occasion from them to scoff at Christianity, and say that Christians have no such thing as Certainty in what they believe; but are continually quarrelling, and tearing one another to pieces, upon Controversies of every kind. It is sufficiently known, with what Boast and Insult, a late Sceptic attack'd the various Schemes concerning Predestination, and made his use of the too great Rigor with which that Argument is generally treated.

14. T H E Y who are against tolerating Errors, which are not Fundamental, must think

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(a) *Ammianus Marcellinus*, Lib. XXII. Cap. 5.

themselves infallible : for if they thought themselves liable to err, they would also think that they stood as much in need of Forbearance as other Persons ; and therefore would readily allow the same Privilege to others, and say with the Poet,

*This Freedom too we mutually allow.*

Hor. Art of Poetry, Ver. 11.

15. IF Indulgence ought to be allowed to Faults and Crimes of a lesser Nature, (which none will deny) why not also to Errors of equal degree? What! are moral Vices and Crimes of a less heinous and offensive Nature, than inaccurate Notions about things sublime and obscure, which sometimes only reside in the Understanding, without having any evil Influence upon practice?

16. BESIDES, the Necessity of this Forbearance is confirmed from the Example of God himself, who does with such admirable Patience and Goodness, bear with the Infirmities of Men, and who has manifested remarkable Gentleness and Forbearance in all his Revelations and Dispensations. When he accommodated himself to the gross Notions of the *Jews*, and treated and argued with them after the manner of Men, what was this but the most gracious Condescension, in bearing with their childish Notions, till he had brought them to more manly Thoughts? And every considerate Person will find more In-

stances than one of this Nature in the Christian Revelation.

17. **THIS** Forbearance is also enforced by the Example of Christ. How many Errors did he bear with, in his Apostles and Disciples, until the Spirit descended like Fire upon them, and purged them away; as their Errors about the Nature of his Kingdom, about his Death, Ceremonies, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. The Apostles in many Cases had but *little Faith*; and yet with admirable Gentleness and Patience, he bears with their weak Faith.

18. **THIS** Forbearance is also recommended to us from the Example of the Apostles, who, tho they were infallible, as we have seen before, yet exercised Forbearance themselves, and enjoined the Practice of it upon others.

19. **AND** herein they were imitated by their Successors, the Fathers of the Primitive Church, at least by the best and wisest of them, whose many Differences of Opinions, and Rites, did not disturb the Peace of the Churches; as particularly *Socrates* (a) has shewn. And therefore if any arose, who too rigorously condemned their Brethren, and refused them Communion; as *Victor* about the Observation of *Easter*, and *Stephen* in the Dispute concerning the Baptism of *Hereticks*; others stood up and opposed such unchristian Attempts, and never scrupl'd to rebuke them sharply for such things. I confess Persecution gain'd ground, with other Evils

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(a) *Hist. Eccles. Lib. V. cap. 22.*



that sprung up in the Church, till at last Anathema's and Excommunications were thundred out for the meereſt Trifles, without end; and what innumerable Evils aroſe from hence, every one knows: But Chriſt never gave his Diſciples any ſuch Inſtructions; and the firſt and beſt Teachers of Chriſtianity took no ſuch Methods.

*Laſtly*, To add no more, the Divines of latter Times, who have juſtly been reputed Men of Learning and Wiſdom, do all agree with us in this Matter. I ſhall only mention two out of abundance, the one of *Zurich*, the other of *Bern*. The former is the famous *John Wirtzius*, who in the middle of the laſt Century, was Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Zurich*. He ſays (a), *The Foundation of the Fellowship and Communion of Saints upon Earth, is the one God and Father, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm; and conſequently, a Conſent and Agreement in Fundamental Articles of Faith. So that where this Foundation is not, or where this Agreement in Fundamental Articles is wanting, there cannot be that Fellowship and Communion of Saints which we make profeſſion of in the Apoſtles Creed; but the Words of St. John do then take place, If any come unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, &c. But where the Unity of the Foundation, and of Chriſtian Faith does ſtand firm and unſhaken, there is a Communion and Fellowship of Saints, and there it*

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(a) *Diſquiſ. Theol. de Sanctorum Communionem.* §. 61, 62, 67, 70.

ought to be, and to continue firm, and not at all be shaken, by a Disagreement in this or the other Point, which do not directly overturn the Foundation; as also in Rites and Ceremonies: For as all Differences do not utterly destroy the Church, but only those that overturn the Foundation of Faith; in like manner all Differences do not dissolve the Fellowship and Communion of Saints, but only those that directly shake and weaken the Foundation of Faith, in whole or in part. And presently after: In short, Agreement in Fundamentals, or Doctrines necessary to Salvation, is requisite to the Communion of Saints; also in things not Fundamental, in difficult Questions, nay, even in Rites and Ceremonies, Agreement would be amiable, and greatly to be desired. But in this imperfect State, and in so great a Variety of particular Churches, of the Customs of Places, and of human Capacities, it is not to be expected; yet the Communion of Saints may continue firm, as long as their Consent in Fundamentals does so continue. Whence he concludes, that the Reformed Churches may, and ought to come to a Union among themselves. The other is also a Man of great Note, *Benedictus Aretius*, a Divine of Bern, who lived at the Age of the Reformation. He speaking of the Unity of the Church, tells us (a), That it does consist in an Agreement in the chief Articles of true Religion, notwithstanding diversity of Gifts; and repeats it again, That the Unity of the Church

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(a) *Problematum Theologicorum parte III. cap. de Concordia Ecclesiæ.*

consist's in an Agreement in the chief Articles of Faith; and goes on thus: We call those the chief Articles of Faith, which are necessary to Salvation, and which are expressly contained in the Creed. To come to an Agreement in these, is what we call Union; in other things, where Persons can't come to an Agreement, Diversity of Opinions must be allowed: Yea further, we may freely own our Ignorance in these Matters, as St. Austin says, It is no Reproach to a Christian to confess his Ignorance in abundance of Cases; which makes against those who insist upon universal Consent, even in the most minute Questions, and unless a Person will subscribe to every Point, are prepared with their Thunderbolts, Heresies, Sects, Excommunications, nay Prisons, and Death. It were easy to produce proper Instances hereof, if there was need; but we know this was never the Method approved of by the true Church, only some malignant Spirits have kindled such Flames, that they might obtain the Preheminence. But let them consider, what an absurd and impossible thing they require; for there never was so perfect and finish'd a Genius in the World, to whose Judgment all learned Men could see Reason to subscribe, and to conform their own private Sentiments —. 2. And the Diversity of Gifts seems to speak the same thing; for what if I have not that Light that you have, or you that I have, or neither of us what a third hath, shall we therefore go to persecute one another for our different Apprehensions of things? No! Religion allows no such thing. 3. But if we examine the thing more thoroughly, this Diversity of Opinions sometimes



*times has its Advantages; for hereby Mens Abilities are excited, the Reason of Things is more duly considered, Scripture is more carefully examined and compared with itself, Arguments are more impartially weighed, and Posterity comes to understand and believe what at first was thought to be absurd. Thus excellently well does he argue.*

BUT we are not insensible that several things may be objected against this Forbearance of Persons who disagree with each other, that we have been pleading for; which yet may so easily be confuted from what has been already said, that we need not stay particularly to answer them. We shall only observe two things in the general: One is, That whatever is objected against Toleration, or Forbearance, is objected also against Scripture itself; and particularly against the Apostle *Paul*, who so earnestly maintain'd and recommended it to us: the other is, That if any Inconveniencies should happen to attend such a Toleration, or Forbearance, let it be remember'd, there are more, and greater by far, that attend the contrary; which is not an ungrounded Assertion, but abundantly confirm'd by the Experience of all Ages; as all who are acquainted with the State of the Church in antient or latter Times, will readily own.





## C H A P. VIII.

*An Instance of a Fundamental Difference in our  
Separation from the Church of Rome.*

**W**H A T has been hitherto said, has been mostly in generals : we will now briefly propose an Instance of a Fundamental Difference, and another of a Difference not Fundamental ; both which we shall take from the neighbouring and most considerable Societies of Christians in the World. And hereby the Use and Application of the Rules which we have laid down, will be made to appear.

**T H E R E** is not a more flagrant Instance of the former any where to be met with, than in our Separation from the Church of *Rome*, which before we go about to explain, there needs a few things to be cleared. *First*, To form a right Judgment of the *Romish Religion*, we are not to regard the Sentiments of this, or that private Man, or of this or that private Doctor ; but we are to regard publick Acts, Decrees of Councils, which in their Account have the Authority of Law ; the constant Usage of their Church, which has never been condemned, but carefully enjoined and applauded. *Secondly*, It must be owned, the *Papists* do admit all the Fundamental Points of the Christian Religion, but yet by

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another way, which has been already taken notice of, do effectually strike at the Foundation itself, by adding to, or building such things upon the Foundation, as do loosen, and in a great measure destroy it. *Thirdly*, Yet all the Errors of the *Papists* are not of the same Consequence; some indeed are tolerable, but others cannot by any means be borne with. *Fourthly*, We must also distinguish between different Times: for some things might very well be borne with, at a time when there was less Light, and Errors were not so thoroughly established, and a greater Liberty was allowed Men to differ; which things at another time, and in other Circumstances, would be perfectly intolerable, after greater Light had shined forth, and greater Advantages were given to discover the Truth; and after those things, which formerly were left free and undetermined, were pass'd into the Form of a Law. *Fifthly*, We must make a great Difference between our judging of them, and our judging of things; and indeed the best way is to pass no Judgment at all upon Men, but to leave them to the Judgment of God, unless we have uncontestable Evidence to go by: But we are allowed to judge freely of Things, of Doctrines, of Worship, and Discipline, from the Word of God.

THESE things being premis'd, we shall briefly offer the following Arguments, to shew that our Dissent from the Church of *Rome* is Fundamental, and consequently that we can  
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have no Communion with her, as Matters now stand.

1. S I N C E they require us to believe, and to profess, and that as Articles of our Faith, things which we do not believe, which we know to be false, yea which we are fully persuaded are absurd and contradictory ; certainly we can't with a safe Conscience communicate with them, but must be Hypocrites in a Matter which of all other is the most weighty and important, and in which Persons cannot dissemble, without incurring the greatest Guilt. Thus they require us to believe *Transubstantiation*, tho we know it is attended with endless Absurdities and Contradictions. They require us to believe *Purgatory*, and the Interest and Intercession of their Saints in Heaven, besides many other things, which at least are doubtful, nay, and some of them plainly false, and contrary to Scripture. Let a Man but read the *Confession of Faith* of Pope Pius IV. which is drawn up according to the Determinations of the *Council of Trent*, and joined to its Decrees, and he will presently see, that all who differ from it, are condemned, anathematiz'd, and consequently that they cannot live in that Communion, without the most detestable Hypocrisy.

B U T it may be said, all Persons are not obliged to believe these things ; it is sufficient only to submit to the Church. But besides many Reasons against submitting to the Church, which we shall see hereafter, all they that do so submit, are by that very Act bound to submit to all

the Decrees of their Councils, and consequently to those Doctrines, of which we have been speaking.

I T will be replied, that the Council of *Trent* hath not been received in all Places, namely in *France*. But *First*, in those very Places, where the Decrees of the Council concerning Discipline, are not admitted, as in *France*, yet their Decrees concerning Matters of Faith are, which are the things we are now speaking of. *Secondly*, most of those things which were determined in the Council of *Trent*, had been determined before in some preceding Councils; as the *Worship of Images* in the second Council of *Nice*, and *Transubstantiation* in the Council of *Lateran*, in the Year 1215.

2. A N O T H E R insuperable Reason why we cannot hold Communion with them, is the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* concerning the supreme Rule, or the supreme Judge of Controversies of Faith. If any thing is Important, or Fundamental in Religion, this is undoubtedly so, *viz.* What is the Rule of Faith: Who is the supreme Judge in religious Matters: Where is the supreme Authority lodged, which ought to determine and regulate all our Belief. There, if any where, we may apply the Words of *Lucretius*\*,

— In building, if the Line  
Be not exact and strait, the Rule decline,  
Or Level false; how vain is the Design?

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\* Book IV. ver. 528.

FOR if any thing is admitted as a Rule of Faith, which is fallacious, and liable to mistake, a Door is hereby opened for all Errors, and the greatest Absurdities; but such is the Rule, such the Judge, and such the Principle which the Church of *Rome* holds, when she makes the *Church*, meaning herself, the infallible Rule of Faith, and supreme Judge of Controversies, to whom all are bound to submit.

NOW, lest they should say we reject this Principle, without giving any Reason, we shall briefly offer two or three things only which seem to be unexceptionable. And,

(1.) IF any Proof is valid that a Person is not infallible, this undoubtedly is so; if it be certain that he has actually erred, and that in a very gross and palpable manner, and very often too; but especially if he has decreed those things which are absurd, impossible, and imply many plain Contradictions: But the Church of *Rome* did so decree in the Case of *Transubstantiation*; and consequently this Instance alone is sufficient utterly to overthrow that Principle.

(2.) THERE is no need of taking any great pains to overthrow the Popish Rule of Faith; we may sit still, and at a distance behold them opposing one another: For if the Church is infallible, this Infallibility must reside either in the Pope, or in Councils; or in Pope and Councils both together. But the *Gallican* Church hath abundantly shewn that the Pope is not infallible; and the *Italians* on the other hand have as plainly shewn, that Councils are not

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And each side frequently reject the Decrees of Pope and Councils together ; so that we may hold our peace, and be quiet, and they themselves will destroy one another, and sufficiently demonstrate the Defect of their own Rule.

AND that these intestine Divisions amongst them are not a light and trivial Matter, is abundantly evident, from innumerable other Quarrels which have been carried on with great Warmth in former times ; but especially from the present Dispute about the Constitution *Unigenitus* : For great part of the *Gallican* Church does charge the Pope in their publick Writings, with grievous Errors in Matters of Faith, and moral Principles, and in Matters of Discipline too. On the other hand, the Pope takes frequent occasion to anathematize those that oppose him : Some Bishops take part with the Pope, others are against him, and it is not yet known what will be the Issue of so warm a Contention. Now, what Madness and Folly would it be for us to involve ourselves in Controversies of so great Importance, about the most important Question of all other, *viz.* the Rule of Faith ; wherein, to speak the Truth, both sides seem to conquer in attacking their Adversary's Cause, and both to be conquered, when they come to state and defend their own?

(3.) WE have yet greater Reason to reject their Rule, when we consider that it destroys all Certainty of Faith ; and necessarily introduces Scepticism : For that we may be certain of the Authority of the Church, it must be discovered

vered to us, either by the Light of Nature, or by Scripture, or by the Determinations of the Church herself. But it can't be known by the Light of Nature; for there is no such Principle in Nature, that there is an infallible Church: nor from Scripture, as may be infer'd from their own Confession; for they say, that the Authority and Sense of Scripture itself, does depend upon the Church, and cannot be known but by her Assistance; and those Texts that are brought to prove this matter, are very foreign to the purpose. Nor, lastly, can it be known from the Church herself: For, to say that we are to believe the Church, because the Church has so determin'd, is ridiculously to take for granted what ought to be proved.

NOR is it sufficient to know that there is a Church, yea an infallible one; but we ought to know which and where that is, and by whom she makes known her Mind. Concerning which things, we have already shewn how greatly they differ and contradict one another.

AND if we were certain thus far, we ought to know further, in what things the Church cannot err; whether in matters of *Fact*, as well as in matters of *Right*; and in matters of *Discipline*, as well as of *Doctrine*.

MOREOVER, we ought to know all that is necessary to make the Determinations of the Church valid, that they may have the force of a Law: If they are Popes Bulls; when they are to be esteem'd authoritative, when the Pope speaks

speaks *ex cathedra* : If they are the Decrees of Councils, we ought to be inform'd when they are lawfully assembled, who are the true Members that ought to be present, what is the due Form of proceeding, and when they are truly General Councils, &c. which things make the Popish Rule of Faith the most uncertain thing in the World : And hence every one may see what reason we have to reject it.

3. B U T one of the principal Reasons which make us call our Difference with the Papists a fundamental one, is taken from the business of Worship, which is not only very different from, but such as can never be reconcil'd and brought to the same Form with ours. For that Worship which is used in the Church of *Rome*, and which she enjoins upon pain of Excommunication, and for the neglect of which, she inflicts the greatest temporal Punishments, the same we count sinful, unlawful, contrary to the Word of God, and full of Superstition and Idolatry ; as the Adoration of the Host, Images, Reliques, and the Cross ; the Invocation of Saints and Angels, and all such like Fooleries. We don't now enter into the Debate whether we herein mistake or not : this however is certain, that as long as we are of this mind, we can't possibly join with a Church that ordains such Worship : for as the Apostle says † in a like case, *What Communion hath Light with Darknes? or what Agreement has the Temple of*

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† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16.



*God with Idols?* From whence he immediately draws this Inference in the words of the Prophet, *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch no unclean thing, saith the Lord.*

THE force of which reasoning will be increas'd by the following Observations, which we shall only mention. *First*, This difference is not speculative, but altogether practical; for the whole Affair of Divine Worship turns upon it, and therefore nothing can be of greater Weight and Importance than this matter. *Secondly*, The Design of Christianity, nay the very Essence and Foundation of it, is to reclaim Mankind from the Worship of Creatures, and things which by Nature are not God, to the Worship of the only true God. Whence it appears to be most intolerable Presumption in those who, contrary hereunto, attempt to call us off from the true God to the Worship of Creatures and dumb Idols. *Thirdly*, However this Worship may be palliated, and speciously defended, yet it is so evident in Fact, and the practice of it so publickly allowed of, that it cannot be called into question. *Fourthly*, This Argument is as plain as can be; nothing can be more evident and obvious to the Capacity of every one; there is no need of Acuteness and Sagacity to discern it. The Rule of God's Word is very plain on the one hand, and the contrary Practice is as obvious on the other.

4. AS their Errors in Doctrine are exceeding gross, and their Superstitions in Worship not to

be borne with, so the Tyranny of their Government is so great, that we can by no means submit to such an intolerable and antichristian Yoke. For here we see the Papal Monarchy obtained by mere Usurpation; Laws enacted in perfect opposition to the Laws of Christ; Dispensations from the Divine Law readily granted, as in the case of Marriages, and Absolutions from Oaths indulged to Kings and Princes with the utmost Perfidiousness, and to the subversion of all Society. Such a heap of Laws about Ceremonies, as does effectually bring us back again to Judaism and Heathenism; Christian Liberty entirely abolished, Anathemas denounced against those who differ from them even in the most trifling things, as in the number of the Sacraments. *Lastly*, Fines and Imprisonments, Gibbets, Stakes, the Inquisition, with the like wholesome Severities: All which give us such an abhorrence of the Popish Communion, that as long as the Authority of the Pope continues, we can never think of submitting to his Discipline, or of leaving our Lives, and the Comfort of them, our Faith and Conscience, at his mercy.

I N a word, let them shake off the Popish Yoke, which the Papists themselves begin to be sufficiently sensible is intolerable: Let no Violence be ever offer'd to Conscience; let all Men judge of Religion from the Word of God only; let every thing that favours of Idolatry, be banish'd from their Worship, and then we shall not be backward, but readily concert Measures towards a Reconciliation and Union with them.

C H A P.



## C H A P. IX.

*An Instance of a Difference not Fundamental, in the Disagreement between Protestants, viz. the Lutherans, and those that are called the Reformed. That their Differences are not so great, but that they easily may, and ought to agree with, and tolerate each other.*



WE have seen an Instance of a Fundamental Difference; but the Difference of those who have agreed in shaking off the Papal Yoke, is quite of another Nature; some of whom, for distinction sake, are called *Lutherans*, and others *Reformed*. And whosoever calmly and impartially considers the Differences amongst them, will easily perceive that they are by no means such as should hinder mutual Forbearance and Christian Harmony, which has been always greatly wanted, but is more especially necessary to both sides in the present Juncture.

AND that we may make our Way the more easy, we shall premise three things: *First*, We don't mean that Persons should be required to change their Opinions, which as it would be unjust to insist upon, so it would be impossible to accomplish; but only that those who entertain different Sentiments, should bear with one another,



ther, which to Persons of Piety and Moderation ought not to be reckoned any great Difficulty. *Secondly*, We are not in this matter to regard the too rigid Determinations, or the imprudent Writings and Expressions, or the odd Opinions of particular Persons, but only publick Records, or Confessions by Princes, or Churches, which whatever Authority they may have, yet in the Opinion of Protestants are not infallible, but are to be judged of by the Rule of Scripture. *Thirdly*, The Opinions of each side are never to be confounded with the Consequences of them, whether they be truly or falliely deduced; and Consequences ought never to be charged upon any who do not own them, but it may be abhor them, unless the Case be so plain and palpable, and so universally acknowledged, that no one who owns the Principle, can possibly deny the Consequence.

T H E S E things being premis'd, let us see in short how far Protestants agree with one another, and in comparison hereof, how small their Disagreement is; whence it will appear how easy, yea how reasonable and necessary it is for them to come to that Forbearance and Unity of which we speak

H O W considerable and important their Agreement is, may be understood by comparing together their *Confessions of Faith*; yea, it is very evident, by considering the *Augsburgh Confession* alone, which both sides receive and acknowledge. Both sides agree that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures, is the only  
Rule

Rule of Faith, by which Rule all humane Traditions and Sanctions are to be judged of; That the only true God is the Object of all religious Worship, and that the least Shew of Devotion is not to be paid to Angels, or Saints, to Crosses, or Reliques, or to any Images of Wood, or Stone, or the like. Both sides place all their Hope of Pardon and Salvation in Christ alone; in his Merits, and Promises. Both agree that the Benefits purchased by Christ, and consequently eternal Salvation, are not to be obtained but by Faith and Repentance, and that not by a dead Faith, but such as works by Love, and by Repentance, that is sincere, and demonstrated by a Life of good Works. Both solemnize the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, according to the Command of Christ, without those many Inventions of Men, by which these holy Mysteries have been greatly abus'd and corrupted; and so conform themselves to the wholesome Institution of Christ, by which his Love is ratified to us. Both acknowledge, that Prayers and Praises, Thanksgivings and Almsdeeds, that our Bodies, and even our whole selves, are the true Offerings and Sacrifices which we are to present unto God, and renounce that unbloody Sacrifice which others have added, as impious and absurd. Both believe that there are but two Ends of all Men, eternal Glory, and eternal Misery; and reject that middle State of Purgatory, which some, contrary to the Word of God, have devised merely to support their Avarice and Superstition.

on. And in short, all the Principles of the Christian Faith, without exception, are received in common on both sides, together with an Abhorrence of the Errors and Superstitions of Popery. Nor indeed can it be imagined how Persons, who seriously consider these things, and are suitably affected with the Importance of them, can be satisfied to break the Bond of Fellowship, and refrain from worshipping God together, upon account of some few and trivial Differences about things that are obscure.

SUCH is their Agreement; in comparison of which, as is now evident, and may easily be prov'd, their Disagreement is small and inconsiderable. We shall not stay here, to take notice of some small Differences in ritual Matters, as about the Use of Tapers, Images, Confession, and Exorcism in Baptism, &c. which are not the same every where, and ought to be no Obstacle to a hearty Union; for every Church may enjoy its own particular Usages, and the Observation of these things be left at liberty, and not be obliged to a constant invariable Form herein, as is acknowledged in the Confessions of both sides: nor shall we touch upon some less Differences in matters of Opinion, which are either Disputes about Words only, or peculiar Tenets of private Divines rather than of whole Churches; or it may be only Consequences drawn from some Principles, which are by no means to be charged on the Churches themselves. All these things we shall pass over for the present, and briefly give our Judgment, and  
† that



that with Freedom and a Desire to promote Peace, concerning three principal Controversies only, which seem to be all that are of any moment and which alone use to be regarded in this matter.

THE first Question therefore is, whether the Body of Christ be truly and substantially present in the Eucharist?

THO this at first sight may seem to be a Controversy of very great moment, yet if we look more narrowly into it, and consider what is granted on both sides, we shall have different Apprehensions of it: for both sides grant that the Bread and Wine are truly present, and continue all the time of the Celebration; and therefore are not converted or transubstantiated into the Body of Christ. On the other hand, both sides agree that Christ is truly present, yea that his Body and Blood are truly exhibited, and are so far present as the Nature of a Sacrament requires. They both agree that the Body and Blood of Christ are not present in a gross and sensible manner, so as to be included in that Place; that they are not present after the manner of Bodies, but after the manner of Spirits, or in a spiritual manner; yea are no more nor less present than as the Nature and End of a Sacrament require, and therefore only in a *Sacramental Manner*, which is an Expression admitted and us'd on both sides. Further, both sides equally condemn the Abuses and Superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, as Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, with-holding the Cup from the Laity, the Procession,

cession, Elevation and Adoration of the Host. Finally, both sides are fully satisfied that bodily Eating, such as is performed by good and bad Men alike, does not avail us to Salvation, but only that which is perform'd by Faith. To which purpose one might bring a plain Testimony from \* *Luther*, and a no leis remarkable one from † *Brentius*; which for brevity's sake we omit. What Difference does now remain? not any concerning the Presence it self: for both sides confess, if we would speak accurately, that the Body of Christ is only so far present as the Nature and End of the Sacrament require: all the Difference therefore is concerning the manner of his Presence, one side contenting themselves with believing such a sort of Presence as is plain and easy to be conceived, and agreeable to the Stile of Scripture, the other imagining that Christ is present in some wonderful and incomprehensible manner, which to the former seems to be of no manner of use, and attended with unsurmountable Difficulties, and therefore they cannot admit of it. This is the whole Subject of Difference; and what there is in this that affects the Foundation of Faith in the least, we cannot see, or what should hinder such Persons from bearing with one another, till God grant greater Light to those who are under a Mistake in the matter.

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\* In Catechismo minori.

† In Syngrammate Suevorum; tum in exegesi in Joannem.

NEITHER is there any greater Weight in that other Question which arises out of the former, concerning the Person of Christ, Whether the divine Perfections, such as Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and the like, are communicated to his human Nature: For each Side owns all that is important in this matter, *viz.* the two Natures of Christ, and the Union of both, to be without any Change, or Division, or Mixture of either; that the Properties of both Natures are ascribed to Christ; and finally, that this Mystery of Godliness, concerning *God manifest in the Flesh*, is a Thing very sublime, far above the Comprehension of Men. Other things which remain doubtful, are so obscure in themselves, and come to little more than a Debate about Words, that it must be a very hard Case, as that excellent Man and Divine, *John Lewis Fabricius* \*, has observ'd, and proceed from great want of Charity, if Persons, who don't exactly agree in such things, can't regard each other as Brethren notwithstanding.

T H E R E remains a third Controversy, concerning Predestination; a Matter that was never brought into dispute in *Luther's* Time, nor many Years after, but seems to have broke out first in the Quarrel between *Zanchy* and *Marbachius*, about the Year 1561. However, *Zanchy* did not deny a general Will in God to save all Men if they believed, as may be

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\* In Meditatione circa Personam Christi.



seen in his Writings \* ; neither did he teach any thing more rigid, about Election and Reprobation, than *Luther* himself has done \*. This Controversy afterwards increased, and is now reckon'd by most Persons to be the chief of all. But tho some Branches of it may be greatly magnify'd, as those Questions which are *concerning universal and particular Grace, Whether Election depends upon foreseen Faith, Whether the Grace of God be resistible or irresistible, And whether Believers may fall from Grace or not*; yet those who diligently consider the Matter, will see, that upon the whole there is a great Agreement between them; and that such as are herein mistaken, (tho we do not now enquire who they are) may nevertheless be very good Christians. For both Sides agree, *First*, That God is the Author of every good Thing; but that all Evil comes from our selves. *Secondly*, That Man is a free Agent, worthy of Honour or Reproach, and inexcusable whenever he sins against God. *Thirdly*, That every Man who believes and repents, is readily accepted of God; and that it is very pleasing to him for any one thus to believe and repent. *Fourthly*, That all who perish, do so through their own Fault; that God is not at all wanting to them, or any way accessory hereunto; and therefore, that their Destruction is no way to be charged upon him. *Fifthly*, That nothing

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\* Depuls. Calumn.

† In Lib. de Servo Arbitrio, aliisque in locis.

comes to pass in Time, but what was determined or permitted to be in the eternal Decrees of God. *Sixthly*, That God did by one most simple Act thus decree all things. *Seventhly*, That God will render to every Man according to his Works, and proceed in the Judgment of all with the greatest Equity, Wisdom, and Clemency. And *Lastly*, That in all these Questions concerning the Ways and Counsels of God, there are many things which are far above our Comprehension, many things, the Reasons and Manner of which we cannot account for. And here both Sides are ready to cry out in the Words of the Apostle, *O the Depths, &c.* and acknowledge that they are very well adapted to this Controversy.

TO all which if we add the following Things: *First*, That *Luther* has spoken as harshly of these things, if not more so, than any of the Reformed. *Secondly*, That *Melancthon*, who had far more moderate Sentiments in these things, and whom the *Lutherans* do now follow, did nevertheless maintain great Friendship with both *Luther* and *Calvin* as long as they lived. *Thirdly*, That many of the Reformed Divines, as *Bullinger*, that great Man, and Superintendent of *Zurich*, did plainly approach to \* *Melancthon's* Judgment, (for which reason he was said to *melancthonise*.) *Fourthly*, That a great part of the Reformed at present, name-

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\* As may be seen in several of his Works, but especially in his *Oration de Moderatione servanda in negotio Prædestinationis, &c.*

ly, almost all the *English* Bishops, the Divines of *Brandenburg*, and many others, do either agree with the *Lutherans* in these Points, or come very near them. *Fifthly*, That those of the Reformed, that are most rigid in their Notions of Predestination, abhor every impious Consequence that may be deduced from thence, and follow after Holiness themselves, and urge it upon others as much as any. If all these Things were considered and duly weighed by a pious and peaceable Mind, it would appear, that arduous and sublime Questions about Predestination ought by no means to separate Men in Affection from one another, and to hinder Love and Concord; but every Man should enjoy his own Opinions without raising Jealousies, and molesting others, upon such Matters: much less would one expect that the Communion of the Church, and the common Rights of Christians, should be suspended upon so perplex'd and obscure a Point.

W H A T has been said concerning the small Importance of such Controversies, and the Reasonableness of exercising Forbearance in these Things, will receive further Confirmation by observing what follows, which we shall but mention, and leave to the pious and peaceable Christian to consider and enlarge upon: *First*, That all these Questions reside in the Understanding only, and have little or no Influence upon our Worship and Practice: for which reason we easily may, and certainly ought to bear with one another's different



ferent Sentiments. *Secondly*, That they are Things above common Capacities, and indeed little more than scholastick Questions. *Thirdly*, There are many Christians on both sides, who, it may be, have never heard of these Disputes, or understand very little of them, or are mistaken about them, or who are doubtful, and never could assent either way; and whether these are to be debarr'd the Hope of Salvation, or to be excluded from the Communion of the Church, we desire our *Lutheran* Brethren calmly to consider. *Fourthly*, The Dispute is not so much about Things themselves, as the Mode and Circumstances of them; as has been already observed. *Fifthly*, These Questions do not so much concern good Men as bad, *i. e.* the Admission of Persons unworthy, and God's Decrees concerning the Reprobate. Why should not we therefore pass by them, and make it our Business to be found in the number of the Faithful? *Sixthly*, Both Sides design well; therefore if they do not merit Praise, they ought however to be excused. *Seventhly*, Too much of human Frailty has been very visible in these Disputes already, preposterous Zeal, intemperate Anger, and too plain Instances of Ambition and Vain-glory. These Passions have too much prevail'd, and it is high time now to allay and suppress them. *Eighthly*, There are exceeding great and almost insuperable Difficulties on both sides, especially about the Doctrine of Predestination. *Ninthly*, The Controversy about Predestination has been debated in

all Ages, in all Places, and by Persons of all Persuasions. *Tenthly*, There have been great and considerable Men on both sides, Men that we cannot easily condemn, and should be loth to reject from our Communion; such as *St. Chrysostom*, and the Fathers of the first Ages on one side, and *St. Austin*, with a vast Number of Followers on the other. Should these Men be raised, and live again in our Day, how readily should we embrace them? at least, we could not think of casting them out of the Church, and debarring them the Offices of it. *Eleventhly*, We may learn Wisdom in this matter from our very Adversaries, the Papists, who, tho they are generally very rigid, and the greatest Enemies to Toleration, yet in this very Affair, and in Things of greater moment too, bear with one another's different Sentiments, and retain both Parties in their Communion. *Twelfthly*, The Questions which are now the matter of Debate, were quite left out of the *Ausburgh* Confession, as was acknowledged by Divines of both sides in the Conference at *Leipsick*. *Thirteenthly*, There are many other Differences of Opinion, not only of equal Importance, but far greater, which yet are patiently borne with on both sides; and why should not the like Moderation be used in these? *Lastly*, To add no more, I would only ask one thing: Can it be any where shewn, that God, the only Lawgiver, and who alone has power to save and to destroy, has ever determined that those Doctrines, which are controverted among Protestants,

testants, are necessary to be known, in one or other determinate Sense, in order to Salvation? or that the opposite Errors do exclude Men from Salvation? To say that he has, would shew great Rashness, and betray a Mind blinded with Party-Zeal. But if the great Judge of the World has determined no such thing, what Arrogance is it for such as we to desire to be thought more righteous and more rigid than God himself?

HITHERTO, therefore, it has been plainly shewn, that there is so great an Agreement among Protestants, and that their Disagreement is so inconsiderable, that they may very well exercise mutual Forbearance, and enter into a hearty Union with one another. But we shall go a Step further, and venture to assert, that this is not a Matter left to our Liberty, but of the utmost Necessity and most strict Obligation, whether we regard Conscience or Prudence. And first, with regard to Conscience: For if this Disagreement does not hinder but Persons who so differ may be good Christians, and true Members of the Church, Communion must necessarily be held with them; which if we deny, we are guilty of violating the great Law of Charity, and of rending asunder the Body of Christ: For Christ has declared that all his Disciples *should be one*; and St. Paul directs, that the *Unity of the Spirit be kept in the Bond of Peace*; as we have endeavour'd to shew, Chap. VII. by a great Number and Force of Arguments. But no one has press'd this  
Matter,



Matter more strongly, as far as it concerns the Controversies that are among Protestants, than the most pious and great Lover of Peace, *Samuel Werenfels*, to whose excellent \* Treatise we refer the Reader.

BUT such a Union is no less necessary from the Laws of Prudence, than from the Obligations of Duty and Conscience: For who can be ignorant how many Evils have sprung up from the Violation of it? What Hatred, Strife, and Wars; what a pernicious Custom of endless Debates and Slander; what Loss of Time; what a visible Decay of Piety and Charity; what a Hindrance to Reformation; and what Triumphs of the Papists and other Adversaries; when all the good Effects, contrary to these Evils, might be procured by the Agreement we have been recommending?

HOWEVER, lest any one should pretend that what we have been proposing is indeed an excellent and laudable Design, and greatly to be desired, but no more likely ever to be accomplish'd, than squaring the Circle, or finding the Philosopher's-Stone: This Difficulty, tho it be not altogether imaginary, yet we shall remove it in a few Words, *viz.* For what hinders but that which has formerly and elsewhere been often accomplish'd, if not in all Churches, nor perhaps upon a lasting Foundation, yet in many Places, and at divers Times,

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\* *Considerationes generales de Ratione uniendi Ecclesias Protestantas.*

may be effected again; nay, and become universal? There are several known Instances of such a Union which are before every ones Eyes, *viz.* at Marburg, 1529. at Wittenburg, 1536. at Sendomir, and other Places of Poland and Bohemia, 1570. and the following Years at *Leipsic*, 1631. at *Charenton* the same Year; at *Cassel* 1661. and at *Koningsberg* in *Prussia* not long since. To these we may add many Acts of the Dyets in *Germany*, from the beginning of the Reformation, even to the present Times, in which the Reformed have been acknowledged as Brethren of the *Ausburgh* Confession, and are still so accounted. To all which may be added innumerable Writings of Princes and States, Churches and Universities, as likewise pious and moderate Men on both sides, who have endeavoured to persuade to such a Union, to promote and recommend it, and laid down proper Methods to effect it. And the famous and learned *Christ. Matth. Pfsius*, a Divine of *Turbingen*, has very lately profess'd himself to be of the Number of such pious Persons, and Lovers of Peace, with great Honour, and the Applause of all good Men, (for as to any small Difference that remains, it is not worthy to be regarded): Who declares, *That the Coalition of Protestants has hitherto been prevented, not through any Defect in the thing itself, but thro the Faults of Men (a).* And elsewhere (b), he judiciously examines into the Importance of those Controversies that are among Protestants, and shews they are not Fundamental.

(a) Dissert. de Articulis Fundamentalibus. (b) Instituti. Theologic. Dogmat. & Moral.



## C H A P. X.

*Some Advices are offered to promote this Agreement and Forbearance.*



H A T remains, is only to add some short Advices, which may be of use towards effecting this Agreement and Forbearance; which we shall submit to the Examination of all pious Readers, and Lovers of Peace.

1. I T is necessary for all to preserve a true and just Sense of Christianity continually in mind; not such as is made up of some obscure Notions, or Scholastick Niceties, but which consists in the New Creature, *i. e.* in true Piety and real Vertue.

2. T H E Importance of all Doctrines and Controversies ought to be carefully examined by the Word of God, and by the Laws of Prudence; that a Mountain may not be made of a Mole-hill, nor Hay and Stubble be made the Foundation of Christianity.

3. W H E N Matters are really obscure and doubtful, our Assent ought to be with-held; we should not be wise above what is written, but use Caution and Sobriety, according to the Measure of Light which God has granted us.

4. I T is to be desired, that we may never suffer that first, and truly fundamental Principle  
of



of the Reformation, *That the Holy Scripture is the only Rule of our Faith*, to be forgotten; and consequently that we may never subject our Faith to any Assemblies of Men, or to any human Decisions, whatever Authority or Learning they may be possess'd of; but that we may try all things, whatever they may be, by the Rule of Gods Word.

5. W E ought always to bear in mind, that we ourselves are very liable to err; and so we shall not be too tenacious of the Opinions we have formerly entertained, but be always ready to receive further Light, and hearken to the Admonitions of others.

6. A L L those Questions that are disputed among Protestants, which surmount the Capacities of common People, and contribute nothing towards promoting Piety, or Holiness, ought never to be refer'd to them.

7. A N D when such Questions are disputed in Schools, it ought to be with the utmost Modesty and Humility; and at the same time it ought to be shewn that these things do not belong to the Foundation of Faith.

8. I N such Questions, and all that are equally intricate, the very Words of Scripture ought to be used, as much as possible, and the Notions and Terms of the Schoolmen ought with equal Care to be avoided; by which method we shall proceed with greater Safety to ourselves, we shall stop the Mouths of Gainlayers, and make the Way to the Union of the Church more plain and easy to all.

9. O U R Moderation should be uniform towards all Men, and in all Places alike ; that it may not be objected to us, that we are disposed to peaceable Measures with our Fellow-Christians abroad, but rigid and morose towards those with whom we live.

10. L E T us continually endeavour to obtain further Measures of Piety and Holiness, and to grow confirmed therein ; and also to instil the same into others, which is the Crown of all ; by which means we shall find no Time for vain and unprofitable Questions, *which minister nothing to Edification.*

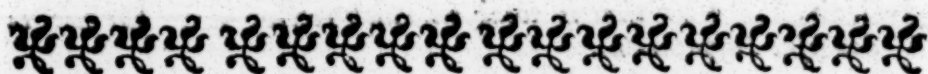
11. W E ought to have that Fundamental Precept of Christ our Lord, always before our Eyes, whereby he has so strictly enjoined all his Disciples *to love one another*, and to put it into practice towards our Dissenting Brethren. For we must not imagine that these little Diversities of Opinions among us, are a sufficient Excuse for the Breach of Charity.

12. O U R Charity must not be shewn by speaking and acting in a private manner only ; but when Occasion offers, and our Brethren consent, we should readily join with them at the Holy Communion. For why should not this solemn Commemoration of our Lord's Death, and this peculiar Expression of Christian Charity, be left in common to all, who agree with us in the principal Parts of Christianity, tho' they differ in some minute and circumstantial Articles.

*Lastly*, as it is incumbent upon us to behave ourselves in such a manner ; so we ought in our several Stations, and according to the Influence

we have, both by our Words and Actions, to instil the same Spirit of Meekness into others. Let Princes, Magistrates and Ministers, do each their Part; and then we may hope that these Seeds of Moderation and Forbearance, being watered by the Dew of Heaven, will happily spring up, and bring forth the most pleasant Fruit, to the Glory of God, the Edification and Union of the Church, and our own eternal Salvation, according to that of the Apostle (a), *The Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace.* Amen, Amen.

(a) Jam. iii. 18.



Testimonies of Scripture, by which, what has been said concerning *Fundamental Articles*, and exercising *Forbearance towards our Brethren who differ from us*, is further confirmed and illustrated.

MOSES. Deut. xxix. 29. *The secret Things belong unto the LORD our God: But those Things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of the Law.*

CHRIST. Mat. vii. 1. *Judge not that ye be not judged.*

Luke xii. 48. *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with many Stripes: For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

John xvii. 3. *And this is Life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Matt. xxvii. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.*

St. PETER. Acts ii. 37, 38. *Now when they heard this, they were prick'd in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles*



*Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins; and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.*

**St. PHILIP.** Acts viii. 36. *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain Water: And the Eunuch said, See here is Water; what hindreth me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

**St. PAUL.** Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law: and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law.*

**Rom. x. 6, 9.** *But the Righteousness which is of Faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine Heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above.) If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus; and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead; thou shalt be saved.*

**Ibid. x. 14.** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher?*

**Ibid. xiv. 1.** *Him that is weak in Faith receive you, but not to doubtful Disputations.*

———— **4.** *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth; Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.*

———— **13.** *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: But judge this rather, That no Man put a Stumbling-block, or an Occasion to fall in his Brother's Way.*

———— **17.** *For the Kingdom of Heaven is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

**1 Cor. i. 12, 13.** *Now this I say, That every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the Name of Paul?*

**Ibid. ii. 11, 12, 13.** *For what Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of a Man, which is in him? even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit which is of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know Things that are freely given to us of God. Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual Things with spiritual.*

**Ibid. viii. 1, 2, 3.** *Now as touching Things offered to Idols, we know that we all have Knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up; but Charity edifieth. And if any Man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any Man love God, the same is known of him.*

8, 9. But Meat commendeth us not to God : For neither if we eat, are we the better ; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-block to them that are weak.

12. But when ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Ibid. xiii. 1, 2. Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as a sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge ; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing.

4, 5, 6. Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; Charity envieth not ; Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

9, 10, 12, 13. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see thro a Glass, darkly ; but then Face to Face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is Charity.

Gal. vi. 15, 16. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature. And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and on the Israel of God.

Eph. iv. 1 — 6. I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called. With all Lowliness and Meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love ; Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling ; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism ; One God and Father of all, who is above all and thro all, and in you all.

15. But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

Phil. iii. 15, 16. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded : and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing.

2 Tim. ii. 22 — 25, Flee also youthful Lusts : but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart. But foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes. And the Servant of the

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*the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.*

*Heb. v. 12, 14. For when for the Time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God; and are become such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat. But strong Meat belongeth to them that are of full Age, even those who by reason of Use have their Senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

*Ibid. vi. 1, 2. Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God, Of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying on of Hands, and of Resurrection of the dead, and of eternal Judgment.*

*St. JAMES. Epist. iii. 13. Who is a wise man and endued with Knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works with Meekness of Wisdom.*

*Ibid. iv. 12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*

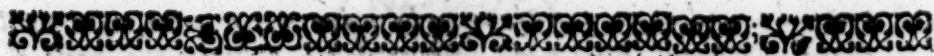
*St. JOHN. I Epist. iii. 23. And this is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.*

*Ibid. iv. 7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another: for Love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.*

*———— 12, 13. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

*———— 15, 16. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

## F I N I S.



## E R R A T A.

**P**Age 8. l. 1. del. *that*. p. 16. bottom, for *of*, read *or*. p. 31. after l. 2. ? l. 30. for *either*, read *neither*. p. 45. for *John XVII. II.* read *II.* p. 48. l. 22. for *vigorous*, read *rigorous*. p. 60. l. 15. 16. *Nice and Lateran in Italick*. p. 57. after the Authority of the Law, add *and*.



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